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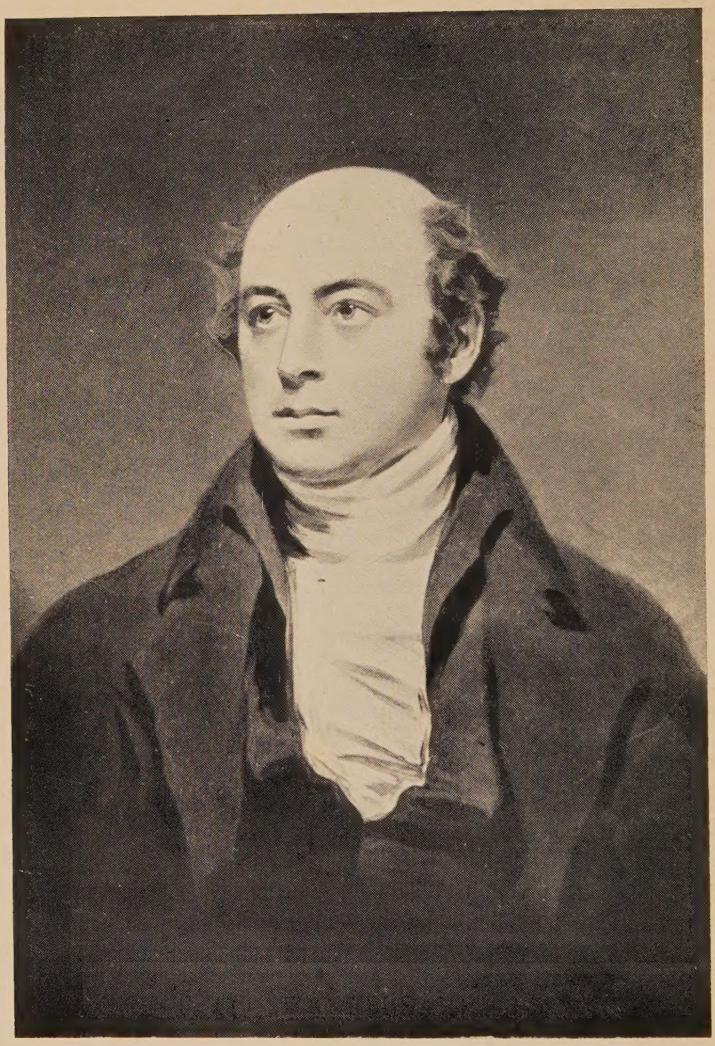

SIR FRANCIS CHANTREY

THE LIVES OF THE BRITISH SCULPTORS

AND THOSE WHO HAVE WORKED IN ENGLAND FROM THE EARLIEST DAYS TO SIR FRANCIS CHANTREY

BY E. BERESFORD CHANCELLOR
M.A., F.R.HIST. SOC.

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PREFACE

An attempt is here made to give a concise account of the lives and works of the British sculptors, and of those foreigners whose labours are chiefly identified with this country. It is a rather remarkable fact that this has never been done before. True, Allan Cunningham, in his "Lives of the Painters," allocated one volume of that work to a consideration of a few of the better-known sculptors; but his book was issued nearly a century ago, and, besides, it can hardly be said to be altogether satisfactory from various points of view. Very few, too, of the sculptors discussed in this book have been more particularly dealt with, and when I mention a belated, though excellent, little monograph on Grinling Gibbon, by M. Le Roy de Sainte-Croix; an unimportant life of Banks; a preposterous biography of Bacon, by Cecil; J. T. Smith's amusing but spiteful work entitled "Nollekens and his Times"; the recent "Life of Mrs. Damer," by Mr. Percy Noble; and three works dealing with Chantrey, by George Jones, R.A., John Holland, and Mr. J. A. Raymond; I have exhausted practically all that has been written specifically about the sculptors who have worked in this country. On the other hand, scraps of information concerning them are to be found in a large number of books, many often dealing with quite other subjects, and in various manuscript remains (Stone's note-books in the Soane Museum being the most important in this respect); while evidences of their output are to be

seen in numberless cathedrals and churches, private houses and public museums. With regard to the first and second sources of information, I have covered a fairly large ground of research. I need hardly say that I have not inspected all the statues, busts, and monuments mentioned in these pages, but I have done so in many cases, and the more I have done so the more inexplicable it seems to me that those responsible for these splendid works of art should have received so comparatively small a share of attention.

The works dealing with sculpture which are to be found in most large libraries are nearly all chiefly concerned with the achievements of the ancient Greeks or Romans, and it is, I venture to think, time that even so small an attempt as this should be made to tell people something about the lives and labours of those who may, for the most part, be regarded as British sculptors. In London alone we have on all sides a remarkable aggregation of such remains, either in our Abbey, Cathedral, and churches, or in our public open spaces, and it cannot but add to the interest one has in looking at these monuments to know something about the lives of the men who were responsible for them, and who worked, often with such conspicuous success and undaunted courage, to add to the artistic embellishment of the country where they were born, or in which they elected to live. Many of these men are unknown by name to the majority of people; many have left little or nothing tangible behind them; but there are even then sufficient to make an almost unbroken chain of artistic endeavour. The great Torrigiano and Hubert Le Sœur have indeed a wider claim to recognition than that which they gained in this country, but Nicholas Stone, Caius Gabriel Cibber, Grinling Gibbon, Francis Bird, Rysbrack and Roubiliac,

Wilton and Banks, Nollekens and Bacon, all forged links, more or less strong and durable, in the chain which, for my purpose, ends here with the great Flaxman and the greater Chantrey.

Since those days, without mentioning the splendid work done by living men, or by those who have but comparatively recently departed from among us, many fine sculptors have laboured in this country: the Westmacotts, Foley and MacDowell, Gibson and Marochetti, Wyatt and Behner, Marshall and Weekes, Bell and Baily, Carew and Milnes, and, above all, the great Alfred Stevens, a man fitted to take his place by the side of Michael Angelo, will occur to the reader. But it seemed convenient, and almost natural, to make an end with Chantrey, who stands in the forefront of this splendid array, and with whom the art culminated in so notable a manner.

E. B. C.

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TOMB OF HENRY III.

CHAPTER I

THE PRECURSORS: PETER THE ROMAN, SUTTON, CUMMINGS, TORRIGIANO, STEVENS, ETC.

The early history of sculpture in Great Britain is shrouded in more obscurity than is that of any other of the arts—not even excepting architecture, the origins of which, so far as native talent is concerned, are so difficult to trace with any degree of certainty. Indeed, until we come to the reign of James I., and with it the name of Nicholas Stone, there is hardly a single sculptor who stands out with any distinctness, and very few, excepting the great Torrigiano, who worked in this country in the reign of Henry VIII., who call for any special notice. This is the more curious because we have on all sides, in our cathedrals and even in many a country church which seems almost forgotten by Time, monumental remains affording striking proof that some master of the art must have passed that way and left evidences of his handiwork in the beautification of a tomb or the adornment of the fabric itself. We come upon these pearls enshrined in the oysters, as it were, of brick or stone, and we wonder what forgotten brain was responsible for them, what earnest, sometimes it would seem inspired, hand carved those reposeful features, what industrious fingers fashioned that lace-like scrollwork or those clustering soffits.

Thus, when we see, to take but a single instance from among so many that might be named, the wonderful double tomb of the Alards in the Church of St. Thomas, at Winchelsea, we are not only filled with wonder at its astonishing beauty, but with something like amazement that the man who was responsible for it is as unknown as if he had worked on the Pyramids or helped to fashion the Sphinx.

It seems vain to hope that we shall now ever know the names, much less anything of the lives, of these forgotten artists, and all we can do is to marvel at what remains of their output. Not that we are without record, altogether, of sculptors who worked before the seventeenth century; indeed, the names of many of these have been preserved; but seldom are we able to connect any definite piece of sculpture with them, and, sadder still to our *amour propre*, many of them were but visitors to these shores, allured from their native lands by the patronage of British monarchs and the glitter of British gold.

What, of course, accounts very largely for this, is the fact that, although so early as the thirteenth century the English carver had attained a high level of artistry, sculpture, whether as regards figures or decorative work, was practically subservient to architecture, as will be realised by those who are acquainted with the beautiful examples clustering about our great cathedrals and often to be seen in many of the innumerable smaller ecclesiastical buildings throughout the land. Indeed, at Wells and Exeter, to name but these, such a mass of splendidly vigorous, and often dramatic, carving is exhibited, that it is only when we remember that the names of the architects of these vast piles have not survived that we can, to some extent, realise why it is that the identities of the sculptors who graced and decorated their work are also forgotten.

There is no doubt that the vast majority of those who triumphed in the arts during the early days of our history were not natives of our shores, but such as had been invited to this country, and had learned their great lessons in the schools of Italy and France. The first of these was that *Peter the Roman Citizen* whom Walpole and Vertue have sought to identify with Pietro Cavallini, who was born in 1259 and died in 1344.* It is difficult to agree

* These dates are given in the "Nouvelle Biographie Générale," published in 1855; but Gough, in his "Sepulchral Monuments," states that Cavallini was born in 1279 and died in 1364, and on this assumption contends that he could not be identical with Peter the Roman Citizen, who came to this country in 1279. In vol. i. of the "Archæologia" there is a long discussion of the question by Vertue. Bryan's "Dictionary of Painters" favours 1364 as the date of Cavallini's death.

with this; for if the dates given in the text or the footnote are correct, they would either make Cavallini a child on his arrival, or would put the possibility of his having come at all, out of the question.

We shall, therefore, be on safer ground in regarding this pioneer simply as the man known as Peter the Roman Citizen. The most important work by which he is known is the shrine of Edward the Confessor raised by the piety of Henry III. or Abbot Richard de Ware, or probably the joint gift of both.

In the year 1260 Richard de Ware, having just been elected Abbot of Westminster, set out for Rome to receive formal consecration at the hands of Pope Urban IV. At the same time he took the opportunity of engaging skilled artisans to work on the tomb which it was contemplated to raise to the Confessor's memory; and among those who came to England for this purpose was the Peter mentioned above. We have Weever's authority for stating that Abbot de Ware brought back certain workmen with him from Rome, as well as a large quantity of porphyry for use on the tomb, a circumstance confirmed by the inscription formerly on Richard de Ware's own monument (he died in 1283) in the Abbey:

> Abbas Richardus de Wara, qui requiescit
> Hic, portet lapides, quos huc portavit ab Urbe;

while the wording on the Confessor's tomb preserves the name of the chief of those who came over to beautify it:

> Anno milleno Domini cum septuageno
> Et bis centeno, cum completo quasi deno,
> Hoc opus est factum, quod Petrus duxit in actum
> Romanus civis.

According to Mr. Lethaby, in his "Westminster Abbey and the King's Craftsmen," the shrine was originally decorated with eleven small images of kings and saints; amongst them were St. Edmund with the church in one hand, St. Peter trampling on Nero, and a king, probably Henry III. himself, holding a model of the shrine; besides these figures the shrine was decorated with a number of

jewels and cameos. At the sides, upon two pillars, were golden statues of St. Edward and St. John the Evangelist; at the west end was an altar, which was destroyed at the dissolution, and afterwards replaced by a table used at the coronations called St. Edward's altar, since succeeded by a permanent stone altar. In the lower parts were the recesses in which sick persons were often left during the night to be cured by the saint. Round the verge was an inscription "formed of bars of blue glass set in gold mosaic." The glass has long since disappeared, but traces of the lettering are decipherable under the plaster in places.

Peter seems to have remained in this country,* for when Edward I. succeeded to the throne in 1272 he set about the construction of a fine tomb for his father, and the Roman sculptor is said to have beautified it with those "diverse coloured marbles and glittering stones" which the king had brought with him on his return from the Holy Land, and carved "the twisted or serpentine columns of the same speckled marble" with which we know, on the authority of Keepe, that it was adorned.

Vertue supposed that Peter (or Cavallini, as he thought him to be) was responsible for those crosses which the affection of Edward I. caused to be erected in memory of his beloved wife Eleanor; but at least one of these—that at Northampton—is said to have been executed by one, William of Ireland, in London, in the year 1290.

It seems, however, not unreasonable to suppose that, given a skilled man—as Peter must have been to be entrusted with a royal tomb—remaining in this country, as one assumes he did, he would be commissioned to undertake any royal work of importance, and if William of Ireland was responsible for one of the crosses, there is no cause to doubt that Peter had a hand in, at least, some of the others. He may, conceivably, have furnished designs for them even if he did not actually carve them.†

* The tomb of the Venerable Bede, at Durham, has been attributed to him.

† Gough thinks that Peter came hither armed with original designs of Tassi and Gaddi, for the royal tombs. If so, he may have also brought with him some for the crosses, which it was then not unusual to erect.

TOMBS OF AYMER DE VALENCE AND EDMUND CROUCHBACK

It is a curious fact that, although William of Wykeham erected Winchester Cathedral besides other notable buildings, in the reign of Edward III., a monarch who also showed his interest in architecture by engaging his favourite in the rebuilding of Windsor and other fortresses, no names of sculptors, or statuaries or carvers, as they used to be indifferently called, dating from this period, have come down to us. That such existed, however, goes without saying, for besides the decorative portions of the cathedrals, churches and castles which were then built, such examples of what may be termed the more purely sculptor's work—as Wykeham's own tomb and the bust of that prelate which may be seen to-day in one of the corbels of Winchester Cathedral—were executed; while the busts of Henry I. and his Queen, which Dr. Thorpe discovered at the west end of Rochester Cathedral, probably date from about this period, although representing royal personages of an earlier time.

Fine examples, too, of the sculpture of this period may be seen in the tombs of Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, Aveline, Countess of Lancaster, and Edmund Crouchback, Earl of Lancaster, second son of Henry III., in the choir of Westminster Abbey, of which Flaxman thus speaks: "*The monuments of Aymer de Valence and Edmund Crouchback are specimens of the magnificence of sculpture in the reigns of the first two Edwards. The loftiness of the work, the number of the arches and pinnacles, the lightness of the spires, the richness and profusion of foliage and crockets, the solemn repose of the principal statue, the delicacy of thought in the group of angels bearing the soul, and the tender sentiment of concern variously expressed in the relations ranged in order round the basement, forcibly arrest the attention, and carry the thoughts not only to other ages, but to other states of existence.*"

There is so great a similarity between the two first tombs and that of Archbishop Peckham, at Canterbury, that it has been reasonably conjectured that they are the work of one and the same man, and one Master Michael of Canterbury has been named as the probable

artist, while that of Crouchback is conjecturally assigned to Master Richard of Reading.

In the tomb of Aveline, the figure of that noble lady lies, the head being supported by angels. The Countess is robed in a long mantle, and wears the characteristic headdress of the period. In the front of the lower portion are six figures standing in arched niches. The pointed canopy is supported by buttresses, and traces of the whole having once been richly painted, are still discernible. Aymer de Valence's tomb is equally elaborate, or rather was, for time has defaced the beauty of these splendid monuments. The Earl, in full armour, is finely executed. He lies with his feet resting on a lion couchant, and at his head two angels bear his soul, typified by a small figure wrapped in a mantle. On the base of the monument are beautifully carved little figures of his kinsmen, and over the whole, the Earl is again represented, on a richly carved canopy, armed *cap-à-pie* and mounted on his charger.

The monument to Crouchback is the most ambitious of the three. The Earl is represented lying dressed in chain armour, his hands folded in prayer, over which rises a triple canopy elaborately decorated. There are ten trefoil-arched niches on either side of the tomb, in which crowned figures are to be seen.

For the tombs enriched with beautiful canopies which were such a feature at this period, the reader is referred to those of Edward II., at Gloucester, of the De Spencer family at Tewkesbury, and to the somewhat later one of Lady Eleanor de Percy, at Beverley.

In Richard II.'s * reign, a certain *John Sutton*, described merely as a carver, is known to have been employed by Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, to alter a statue of the famous and legendary Guy, Earl of Warwick, which is to be seen in Warwick Church, and also to carve upon

* For the tomb which Richard had prepared for himself in the Abbey, two men, B. and Godfrey of Wood Street, "made the moulds and cast the images of the king and queen." They are, however, merely described as goldsmiths, but their work would seem to have approximated to that of the modern sculptor.

it the armorial bearings of earlier members of this great family. Whether Sutton can properly be enrolled among British sculptors is a question, for such work as he is recorded as doing hardly required the talent, although it may to some extent have exercised the skill, of the sculptor, in the modern acceptation of the title; but when we are groping in the dark the feeblest glimmer of light is acceptable, and has even a greater relative importance than the sun at mid-day, and so we will accept Sutton as at least a pioneer in the path we are setting out upon; a pioneer that is who once spoke our own language and claimed a like nationality as ourselves.

The reigns of Henry IV. and his successor were notable for things other than the development of the Fine Arts, and it is not, therefore, till after the accession of Henry VI. that we have any record of contemporary sculptors, and even then the two names that have come down to us are little more than names. The first is that of one *Thomas Porchalion*, which occurs in the testamentary directions of that magnificent lady Isabel, Countess of Warwick, the daughter of Thomas le Despenser, Earl of Gloucester, and widow of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. In the curious and highly interesting document in which Countess Isabel disposed of her worldly goods she gave directions that "a statue of her should be made all naked with her hair cast backward, *according to the design and model that one Thomas Porchalion had for that purpose.*" *

It seems not improbable that this sculptor was also employed on certain decorative portions of the tomb of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, which is one of the wonders still of the famous Beauchamp Chapel, at Warwick, although his name is not specifically mentioned in the deed † drawn up for its execution between the Earl's executors and the artists employed. Among the artists there referred to we find the names of John Essex, and John Bourde of Corfe Castle, both described as "marblers," which, as being somewhat cognate to our subject, deserve preservation here; although I imagine

* Gough's "Sepulchral Monuments." † Preserved by Dugdale.

a marbler to have been one of those artificers who merely cut and placed the stone in position and were not employed, probably they would have been unequal to the task, in modelling.* The other sculptor of this reign is even more illusive then Porchalion, for we have only his Christian name—*Richard*† (of Reading), and besides the Crouchback monument in the Abbey (if it be his), the sole work he is known to have been engaged on were certain repairs which he carried out in conjunction with a monk named Rowsby in the Church of St. Mary at Stamford,‡ and which may conceivably have resolved themselves merely into the subsidiary decorations with which the artists of those early times so lovingly, and often quaintly, embellished sacred buildings. According to Harrod, who brought out a new edition of Peck's work on Stamford in 1785, Rowsby "attended the carver to direct him in making some image or ornament; he was afterwards parson of St. Clements, and died in 1466"; and the same authority quotes, from the Cottonian MSS., certain expenses incurred on behalf of St. Mary's Church, in 1427, among which I find these two entries:

"Victuals for Richard (the) carver and brother Rowsby £0 0*s.* 5*d.*
"Paid Richard (the) carver £1 10*s.* 0*d.*"

In the following reign, but a single name appears—that of one *Master Cummings*, which Vertue discovered in the archives of the Church of St. Mary Redcliffe, at Bristol. As the entry really seems to indicate the execution of something approaching what we are, nowadays, accustomed to regard as sculpture, it may be that Cummings has a better claim to be regarded as a native sculptor than any of those whom I have before mentioned. Here is the "memorandum" as given by Britton in his account of the church:

"That Master Cummings hath delivered the 4th day of July in the year of our Lord 1470 to Mr. Nicholas

* William Austen was the founder and Thomas Stevyns the coppersmith, engaged on this work.

† I assume he is identical with Richard of Reading.

‡ Peck's "Antiquities of Stamford."

Bettes, vicar of Ratcliffe, Moses Conteryn, Philip Bartholomew, and John Brown, procurators of Ratcliffe beforesaid, a new sepulchre well-gilt and cover thereto, an image of God Almighty rysing out of the same sepulchre, with all the ordinance that longeth thereto; that is to say, a lath made of timber and iron-work thereto;

"Item, thereto longeth *Heven*, made of timber, and stained cloth;

"Item, *Hell*, made of timber and iron work, with devils, the number, thirteen;

"Item, Four Knights armed, keeping the sepulchre, with their weapons in their hands, that is to say, two spears, two axes, two paves;

"Item, Four pair of angel's wings, for four angels, made of timber and well painted;

"Item, The fadre, the crown and visage, the hell with a cross upon it well-gilt with fine gold;

"Item, The Holy Ghost coming out of heven into the sepulchre;

"Item, Longeth to the angels four chevelers." *

Much of this is, of course, mere carpenter's work, but the sepulchre itself with its central figure of God, and the four armed knights guarding it, may be properly regarded as one of the earliest pieces of church sculpture of which, together with the name of its carver, we have any definite record, and is thus of the highest importance in the history of the art as practised in this country..

It is not till the reign of Henry VIII. that we come to a definite record of another sculptor, and when we do, we find him to have been a foreigner—and a famous one; no less a personage, indeed, than that *Pietro Torrigiano*, whose jealousy and ungovernable passion were responsible for the broken nose which Michael Angelo carried to his grave. There seems some doubt as to the exact year when Torrigiano, or Torisano, as the name is sometimes written, came to this country, for Vasari simply states that he was brought hither by some merchants who had

* This was printed in the minutes of the Antiquarian Society in 1736. A *pave* is a large buckler (from the French *pavois*); a *cheveler* is a peruke or headdress.

been attracted by his work, undertaken in competition with Michael Angelo, in Rome, and that he was taken into the king's service and executed a large amount of work for his royal patron, for which he received noble rewards. The most important of these labours was that undertaken in connection with the gorgeous tomb which Henry VII. had begun as a resting-place for the bodies of himself and his family, and which was completed during the early years of his successor's reign, by Henry's executors according to the direction in his will. It was finished,* to be precise, in 1518, and according to Stowe, was made by one Peter, a painter of Florence, who received £1500 for his labour and the material used. This Peter was no other than the famous Pietro Torrigiano; and a proof that he was in this country in the year 1518, although it is more than probable that he was engaged on such an exacting piece of work much earlier still, is forthcoming in a record in the Court of Requests, published in 1592, in which he is given as one of the witnesses in a cause tried between two merchants of his country (probably those with whom he journeyed to England) named Pietro da Bardi and Bernardo Cavalcanti. Henry VII.'s chapel, "one of the stateliest in Europe" Bacon called it, is such a beautiful example of the carving of this period, and exhibits so clearly the heights to which such a man as Torrigiano, and in a lesser degree those who worked under him, rose, when confronted with something which demanded the best they could do, that a few words about it will not be irrelevant here. It is dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin, but is known as Henry VII.'s chapel, from the monarch who began it, and who expended on its beautification far more money than his parsimony ever permitted him to disburse on anything he could have enjoyed during his lifetime. You enter it by a flight of twelve steps beneath the Oratory of Henry V. The entrance gates are of oak, overlaid with brass, wrought with devices and arabesques; among the former may be distinguished

* The original contract for the tomb is preserved in the archives of Westminster Abbey.

the portcullis indicating the king's descent from the Beaufort family, and the Crown and Tudor roses, typifying the union of the houses of York and Lancaster in his person. In the chapel is a central aisle, with two side aisles north and south, and there are five small chapels at the east end. It seems probable that this main fabric was completed in Henry VII.'s lifetime, before Torrigiano came to this country, and that his work was confined to the altar tomb of Henry and his Queen which stands in the centre of the building, and which Lord Bacon called "one of the stateliest and daintiest tombs in Europe." The screen of richly gilt brass work which encloses this beautiful example of Torrigiano's skill, is said to be the work of an English artist—probably Nicholas Ewer, coppersmith and gilder, who, together with Laurence Ymber, a wood-carver, Humphrey Walker, a founder, John Bell and John Maynard, painters, and Robert Vertue, Robert Jennings, and John Lebons, master-masons, worked under Torrigiano, on this tomb. The recumbent figures of Henry VII. and his Queen are executed in bronze, gilt over, and are characterised by a beautiful restraint and simplicity. The tomb, of black marble, is surrounded by a carved frieze and adorned with medallions in copper-gilt representing the Virgin and certain saints—SS. Michael, George, Christopher, Edward the Confessor, and Barbara, among them. At the ends may be seen the king's arms supported by cherubs executed in brass. The beautiful screen of bronze, a portion of which has disappeared, appears to have been executed by English workmen before Henry's death, and on it the king's badges are distinguishable; but the chief part of the work was undoubtedly due to the genius of Torrigiano.*

In the "Archæologia" (vol. xvi. p. 84) is preserved a draft of an indenture for also erecting a tomb for Henry VIII. and Queen Catherine, the place not being specified, at a cost of £2000, between the king and Torrigiano.

* It is said that Torrigiano asked the assistance of Cellini in his work at the Abbey, but the latter, having heard of his quarrel with Michael Angelo, refused to assist him.

It is dated 1518, and was found among Wolsey's papers in the Chapter House at Westminster. The Abbey contains another, and earlier, specimen of the great Italian's skill, in the tomb of Margaret, Countess of Richmond, mother of Henry VII., the effigy on which is of brass gilded and enamelled. It represents her in old age, with her hands raised and pressed together in prayer. She is robed in widow's dress, with a hood and long mantle, and her feet rest on a hind. The figure, which was originally coloured, reposes beneath a small canopy, and lies on a tomb of black marble, with bronze coats of arms surrounded by wreaths similar to those on the tomb of Henry VII. The railing which formerly guarded the figure has disappeared. But perhaps a still more interesting relic of Torrigiano's work, although a far simpler one than these elaborate monuments, is the Tomb of Dr. Young, Master of the Rolls, in the Rolls Chapel, in Chancery Lane. The recumbent figure of Dr. Young is exquisitely modelled in terra-cotta, while at the back, above it, appears a head of Christ supported on each side by that of a cherub.

The mention of terra-cotta reminds me of the beautiful medallions in that material, which may be seen at Hampton Court, and which are almost undoubtedly the work of the same artist, whose royal undertakings would not at that period have been any bar to his working for the royal favourite. Indeed, there is a circular head of Henry VIII. at Hampton Court, which Walpole attributes to Torrigiano without any question; while a model in stone of Henry VII. in his death agony, which was once at Strawberry Hill, was always regarded by Walpole as the work of the same hand; being, as he himself expresses it, "in the great style of Raphael and Michael Angelo, and worthy of either."

Whether Torrigiano did other work in this country, is uncertain, nor is it definitely known how long he remained here, but on leaving he settled in Spain, where his turbulent temper landed him in the Inquisition. Tried and condemned as a heretic (he had, in a fit of passion, broken a statue of the Virgin which he had himself

TOMB OF MARGARET BEAUFORT, COUNTESS OF RICHMOND

carved) he was, by some powerful influence, respited; but in a fit of melancholy—drastic treatment and starveling fare acting on a passionate nature probably—he committed suicide, by refusing to eat the little that was allowed him, at Seville, in the year 1522, and when he was but forty-nine years of age.*

Although the impetus given to the art of sculpture, in this country, by the great Italian, is too obvious to require insisting upon, it must also be remembered that before his advent some excellent work had, as we have seen, been done in this country; and in this connection Dallaway's remarks are worth quoting. Says he: "Although the mausoleum of Henry VII. be, in dimensions and magnificence, a work worthy of all the admiration then bestowed upon it, the art of sculpture and casting in metal, as applied to sepulchral monuments, had previously attained to a positive degree of excellence in this kingdom. If we refer to the effigies of his predecessor, still extant, it will appear that sculpture had made nearly an equal progress with architecture during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Casting in metal succeeded to the art of plating with it upon wood. The faces were wrought from masques taken from the dead subject, and therefore the likeness was preserved entire, of which many curious and authentic specimens are given in Gough's 'Sepulchral Monuments.'

"They occur in the following monuments:

"1272. Henry III.† Copper-gilt. Westminster Abbey.

"1290. Queen Eleanor.† Bronze or latten (brass). Westminster Abbey.

"1307. Edward I. (?) Copper-gilt. Westminster Abbey.

"1327. Edward II. Alabaster. Gloucester Cathedral.

"1377. Edward III. Copper-gilt. Westminster Abbey.

* Cumberland, in his "Anecdotes of Spanish Painters," 1787, relates the story of the broken image at length, as does Condivi, and Duffa in his "Life of Michael Angelo."

† These were both the work of William Torel, "aurifaber," as he was called, one of a famous family of goldsmiths who did much work of this kind at the period. He is known to have been paid £113 6*s.* 8*d.* for three bronze figures, including that of Queen Eleanor referred to above; and his productions have been compared, for grace and beauty, even with those of the great Pisano. There is no figure on Edward I.'s tomb.

"1369. Queen Philippa. Alabaster. Westminster Abbey.

"1395. Richard II. and Queen Anne. Latten or mixed metal. Westminster Abbey.

"1412. Henry IV. and his Queen. Alabaster. Canterbury Cathedral.

"1422. Henry V. Oak, plated with silver, and the head solid silver. Westminster Abbey."

"Added to these are Aymer de Valence, 1246, of oak plated with copper, and John of Eltham, of alabaster, in Westminster Abbey; Edward, the Black Prince, in Canterbury, and Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, in his chapel at Warwick, both of copper-gilt (made by William Austen, the first eminent English founder, contemporary with Donatello and Ghiberti), and, says Flaxman, excelled by nothing done in Italy at this time. The existing contracts are made with English artists; coppersmiths, chasers and gilders."

Henry III.'s tomb is of Italian design, and must have been executed by Italian artists; although Dallaway is correct in stating that there were many men in this country who could, and did, produce excellent work, especially in metal: the Torels, Master Thomas of Lewes (who made the grille for this very tomb), are examples of this. The figure on Queen Eleanor's tomb was certainly Torel's work and is said to have been cast in a single piece. It is interesting to know that "William Sprot and John de Ware furnished the metal and sundry gold florins for the gilding were brought from Lucca"; while one William de Hokyntone did the woodwork, and the carved iron grille, on the ambulatory side, was executed by Master Thomas of Leghtone.

The beautiful alabaster figure of Queen Philippa, on her tomb, was the work of a Fleming, Hennequin de Liège, who worked in Paris under Pepin de Huy, and was once coloured. It appears that there were originally no fewer than seventy figures on this tomb; "divers images in the likeness of angels" being made by John Orchard, bronze worker of London, who also erected the grille.*

* "Gleanings from Westminster Abbey," edited by Parker.

The elaborate tomb of Richard II. and his Queen, also contained a number of figures and coats of arms, and in connection with it the names of the master-masons, Henry Yevele and Stephen Lote, and the coppersmiths, Nicholas Broker and Godfrey Prest, citizens of London, have been preserved; the indentures arranging that the work should be completed in 1397, and the cost to be £670, £270 of which was for the marble work. Yevele was for a number of years master-mason to the Abbey, and was responsible for the tombs of Edward III. and Archbishop Langham, as well as for the design of the new nave.

Much of this work is, as will be seen, that of coppersmiths, and cannot perhaps be properly included in what we now associate with the labour of the sculptor. But in those days these arts overlapped very largely, and, therefore, some of the now forgotten names mentioned should rightly take their place among those of later men who were frankly sculptors and nothing else.

A little later than Torrigiano's stay in this country, in fact, just two years after his death, Wolsey began that magnificent monumental tomb at Windsor, which, according to Lord Herbert, exceeded in magnificence even that of Henry VII., at Westminster. The principal artist employed on this splendid work was *Benedetto da Rovezzano*, like Torrigiano, a Florentine sculptor, who, according to Vasari, not only worked for Wolsey but was also in the pay of Henry VIII., for whom he executed many works in marble and bronze, being, we are told, royally rewarded. He seems never to have completed Wolsey's monument, or perhaps the fall of the prelate put an end to the undertaking, as it is recorded that in 1529 he received 4250 ducats for what he had finished up to that time, and we do not hear of any further payments, on this account, having been made to him. According to Fiddes, in his "Life of Wolsey," Benedetto sought leave from the Cardinal to return to his own country, as did other artificers employed on the tomb—Antony Cavallari, a gilder, among them—but he was, instead, taken into the king's service as I have mentioned.

What were the works he executed for Henry, it is impossible to say, but among them was probably that large statue of the king in metal, which Walpole speaks of as being in a cloister at Gorhambury, and which he describes as being "not in a bad taste." Wolsey's tomb, after the fall of the Cardinal, was annexed by Henry, who proceeded to have it altered so as to form a monument for himself.

Speed, in his "History of Great Britain," copies an MS. of Nicholas Charles, Lancaster Herald, entitled "The Manner of the Tombe to be Made for the King's Grace at Windsor," and Dallaway, in a note to Walpole, gives details of its extraordinary size and magnificence. On it were to be "the figures of Henry VIII. and Jane Seymour, 'recumbent in their royal habits,' not as death, but sleeping; on both sides, and the size of a man and woman, with two angels at the head of each. Upon a high basement between them, upon which shall be the history of St. George embossed, shall stand, the king on horseback in full armour, of the stature of a goodly man and a large horse. Over all, 'the Image of God the Father, holding the king's *soul* in his left hand, and his right hand extended, in the act of benediction.' 13 prophets and 4 saints, all five feet high, and between each, pillars of serpentine marble. The amount of carvings, 133 statues, and 44 stones or bas-reliefs."

This was at a later date sold to the Parliamentary Commissioners for £600, and destroyed by order of the Parliament, during the Civil Wars, so that nothing of Benedetto's extensive work there has survived. Another carver who "made an admirable model of wood with figures of wax"* for the tomb was *Baccio Bandinelli*, but capable artist as he was, his work, which was probably merely executed as a specimen, does not seem to have found favour in Wolsey's eyes, for we hear nothing more of him as being employed on the monument, which may thus be regarded as solely the work of Benedetto da Rovezzano and the artisans employed under him.

Under the spacious reign of Elizabeth, a time when literature, and to some extent painting, emerged gloriously

* Walpole.

from the more or less feeble beginnings of earlier times,* we might have expected to find something more definite with regard to sculpture; but, as in the case of architecture, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, the names of contemporary architects, there is little if anything of importance to record, and a reign which in literature could boast of Shakespeare and the extraordinary constellation of writers only less remarkable—Webster and Ford and Dekker and the rest—and in painting of such pre-eminent artists as Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver and the Bettes, merely to mention British talent, produced but two or three unimportant architects with the exception of the illusive Thorpe, and but two sculptors whom to dignify with this title is perhaps to do them too much honour. For, in truth, they were of little importance; the first one, *Tyrrel*, being merely mentioned in contemporary records as a carver in wood, without anything of his handiwork being recorded; and *Richard Stevens*, a Dutchman, who was paid £292 odd, for executing and setting up the figures on the tomb of Thomas Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex, who left no less than £1500 for this purpose, in Boreham Church, Suffolk, but whose name, so far as I can gather, is not connected with any other existing monument. Dallaway surmises that he was extensively employed, however, and that many of the monuments of this period, chiefly to be seen in Westminster Abbey, composed of alabaster and various marbles, were finished or contracted for by Stevens. He is also known to have been largely employed on those magnificent chimney-pieces which have a similarity to sepulchral monuments in size, composition and embellishment, and of which examples exist at Audley End, Burghley, Hatfield, and elsewhere.

Stevens is also known, perhaps even better known, as a portrait painter and a medallist, than as a sculptor; indeed, so excellent was he in the former branch of art, that so good a judge as Jervas thought that many portraits attributed to Holbein were really the work of Stevens;

* I need hardly point out the exceptions—Chaucer, Gower, and the rest.

MAGDALEN COLLEGE LIBRARY

while his medals of Lord Leicester, Lord Pembroke and Sir Thomas Bodley, are sufficient to prove his mastery in this direction.* This is a meagre record indeed, but the fact is that in these early days, sculpture and architecture were so closely allied, as for that matter certain phases of both arts must to some extent always be, that, at this distance of time, it is difficult, if not well-nigh impossible, to differentiate between the actual output of the so-called architect, carver, mason, and sculptor. Much of the beautiful work we see around us, frequently mutilated as it is by the action of time and the unbalanced zeal of sectarianism, proves that there lived and worked in these times men whose right to be regarded as sculptors, and fine sculptors, is incontestable ; but as we have seen, only very slight records exist concerning a relatively few of them ; and those whose names are most conspicuous, are those who had already made a reputation abroad and were invited to this country to put the finishing touches to some spendid monument, or to execute some gorgeous tomb for a royal or noble patron. The saying that a prophet is without honour in his own country, is nowhere more forcibly exemplified than in the fact that of all those who worked in this direction in England from the time of Henry III. to that of James I., of whom, too, so many remarkable evidences still remain, no record was kept, and apparently little or no consideration was given.

Under Elizabeth, however, a new method of constructing monuments to the illustrious dead came into fashion, which is thus described by Dallaway, and will help to approximately define the work of this period, if it is powerless to indicate the actual designers or contrivers:

"Upon a large altar-tomb of marble was erected an open arcade, having a very rich and complicated en-

* There was another Stevens, not improbably a relation, who was an eminent sculptor of Delft, celebrated for carving vases in precious materials, who was invited to this country by James I. He lived here for some time, during which period a son, Palamedes Stevens, was born to him in 1607. Shortly afterwards, however, he returned to his native land. The son seems to have followed in his father's footsteps as a carver, but he never practised in this country, and died when but thirty-one.

tablature. The columns were marble shafts with capitals, white or black, of the Doric or Corinthian order. Small pyramidal figures, the sides of which were richly veneered with variously coloured pieces, disposed in ornamented squares or circles, supporting globes or balls. Armorial bearings were emblazoned, and the effigies painted and gilt in exact resemblance to the armour or robes in which the noble deceased were invested during life. When these monuments were placed against a wall, which was more commonly done, the plan was accommodated to it, and the alcove, with its columns, universally retained." Many works in Westminster Abbey and elsewhere exemplify this.

CHAPTER II

NICHOLAS STONE, HIS SONS AND HIS PUPILS, ETC.

During the twenty-two years of James I.'s reign, the arts in England made a very distinct and significant advance. This could hardly be said to be due to any enlightened patronage which the monarch bestowed upon them. His tastes took quite a different direction, as students of his times know well enough, and in a curious *olla podrida* of polemical discussion and controversial ingenuity allied to a strangely infantile love of idle and useless pleasures, whether intellectual or material, he found his chief diversion; his delight lay as much in arbitrating between ecclesiastical opponents as in penning advice on all things and sundry: the incontrovertible truth of Divine Right as well as the filthy habit of tobacco-smoking; and when tired of such mental exercises, the pleasures of the chase or the attractions of the table were sufficient to fill up his leisure hours. But if not much was to be hoped, so far as the advancement of art was concerned, from such a mind, it so happened that a taste was being spread about for such things by many of those who in virtue of their position and wealth were best able to patronise and nourish the fine arts. It nearly always happens that after a period of storm and stress, a period of military and naval activity, a period, as it were, of preparation for the mental and intellectual advancement of a people, a time succeeds in which that advancement actually begins and proceeds up to a certain point, until another upheaval brings about a change, to be again followed by a fresh development of the securer arts. The reign of James, as well as the earlier years of that of his successor, is a case in point; and if "King" Elizabeth was succeeded by "Queen"

NICHOLAS STONE AND HIS SON

James, at least under the latter sprang forth those victories of peace which inevitably follow the more striking glories of war. In such cases, some outstanding personalities nearly always shine forth as protagonists in the new movement, and in the reign of James I. such was forthcoming in the person of the splendid George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.

To no figure in the annals of this country can the description of the Latin writer—that he was *alieni appetens, sui profusus*—be so well applied as to the magnificent dandy who was at the same time the chief, though hardly the most enlightened, art-patron of the age in which he lived. There is no occasion here to discuss the complex character of Buckingham. Such an incursion into the realms of history is alien to my purpose. But there is little doubt that it was his love of display and of magnificence in all the outward *formulæ* of life, which gave to the art of this country its motive power during the reigns of the first two Stuarts. As an influence, however, in this direction, the existence of Buckingham was important far beyond what he himself actually desired to accomplish or succeeded in effecting. It was, in fact, his influence over the essentially plastic mind of Charles, Prince of Wales, that had the more significant and far-reaching results. Here, to his hand, was a young prince, studious, cultivated, loving the fine arts so far as he had been able to understand them, in the gross and material atmosphere of his father's court. Such a character only required directing in order to emerge from the chrysalis state of desire into the full butterfly beauty of matured recognition of such things as help to decorate and make life lovely. Buckingham may not have understood or desired such things for themselves; he may have regarded them merely as concomitants to his splendour; and when his henchman, Sir Balthazar Gerbier, or any other of his agents, sent him home treasures they had secured from the Continent, that then recked not of what it was losing, he may rather have regarded his acquisitions as further proofs of his power and glory than as things to be loved and studied for

themselves. But Charles was of a different calibre; caring little for outward display, his joy was in a statue or a picture or a medal because the medal, the picture, or the statue was in itself a thing of beauty, something that had emerged glorious from the artist's hand; something that had become sanctified by age or genius.

Even that hasty, ill-advised, secret journey to Spain, if politically a *faux pas*, at least had its importance in this connection, and in touch with the kindred spirit of Philip IV., and under the influence of Velasquez's splendid powers, the latent artistry in Charles's nature burst forth never again to be subdued, till his head fell from his body before the fragment of that palace which Inigo Jones had raised, and which, under happier auspices, would have proved one of the glories of his reign.

It may, therefore, he asserted that the real beginnings of art in England, the first steps, as it were, in the direction that has had such a splendid continuation, were to some extent due to the brilliant Buckingham whose influence enabled the reticent, tentative spirit of a young prince to emerge into the able, critical, and sound judgment of the first and last really artistically minded ruler of this country.*

Here, of course, we are only dealing with one phase of the art movement of this period: painting and architecture; the production of medals or the weaving of tapestries do not concern us; and if the sculptors who flourished during the reign of James I., with whom we here have to do, can hardly compare, in importance or power, with those who came later, they are at least less shadowy than were, as we have seen, the personalities of their predecessors; and at least one of them stands forth in a far more clear and decisive manner than does any other sculptor before his day. This was Nicholas Stone; but before dealing with him and his sons who followed, though with less success, in his footsteps, I will

* I do not overlook the splendid patronage and refined taste of Lord Arundel; but it was Buckingham's influence over Charles that proved really most beneficial to the arts in this country.

EFFIGY OF QUEEN ELIZABETH, ON HER TOMB

clear the ground by saying what little there is to be said about one or two other statuaries who worked in England during the reign of James.

The first of these was *Maximilian Colte*,* son of one Maximilian Poutrain, otherwise Colte, a foreigner domiciled in this country and living in St. Bartholomew's Close. What little we know of him is gained from such data as Vertue was able to gather together. These unfortunately neither include the date of his birth nor of his death, nor, for the matter of that, any mention of his handiwork, with the exception of the monument, which we can all still see for ourselves, to Queen Elizabeth, in Westminster Abbey, and that in St. Bartholomew's Church executed by him in memory of his daughter, Abigail,† who died, at the age of sixteen, on March 29, 1629. Colte seems, however, notwithstanding our dearth of knowledge of him, to have been favourably known as a sculptor at this period, and indeed, to have been later, actually in the service of the Crown, in Charles's reign, for there is a record of his receiving from the royal treasury, a salary of £8 a year; the particular entry, which Walpole gives from an office book of the Board of Works, being dated 1633. Colte not only resided in the parish of St. Bartholomew, in the church of which his wife was buried in 1645, as is recorded in the registers, but of his two sons, Alexander and John, the latter—who is described merely as a stonecutter and cannot therefore be admitted among the sculptors—also lived in this parish and was interred in the church here together with his wife and family. Another sculptor, whom a contemporary called a "most exquisite artist," and of whom Dallaway says that he "affords the

* This Maximilian Poutrain or Powtrain, as it is sometimes spelt, was associated with one John de Critz in the splendid monument to Queen Elizabeth erected by James I. in Westminster Abbey, which was completed in 1606, at a cost of £765. The recumbent figure of the queen is a fine piece of work, but the crown and other ornaments have disappeared.

The tomb of Mary Queen of Scots, in the Abbey, was the work of Cornelius Cure, and in 1607 a royal warrant ordered payment of £825 10*s.* and "all further sums as the marble shall amount to" to him. The whole cost of the tomb was to be no less than £2000.

† It seems not improbable that Colte executed the altar tomb of the Mildmays in the same church.

first instance of an English sculptor," but concerning whose personality we know too little, was *Epiphanius Evesham*. The single example of his work which has been identified is the monument to Owen, whose "Epigrams" were printed by John Penkethman, in 1624; and it is solely because their translator remarks, in the course of the work, "Give me leave to insert his (Owen's) epitaph, which is engraved in a plate of brass, and fixed under his monumental image, formed and erected by that most exquisite artist, Mr. Epiphanius Evesham, in the Cathedral of St. Paul," that we have even this item of information concerning one who in his day must have done far more than this to earn such high praise.

The name of *Gerard Christmas*, which is sometimes included among the architects of this country,* should perhaps be placed with as good a reason with the sculptors. For although he seems to have been an architect, there is no doubt that he was also a statuary, or at least a carver. His best known work in this direction was the frieze over the chief entrance of old Northumberland House, in which certain letters introduced after the fashion of those days, have been read to indicate that Christmas built the main front; in any case he may with probability be regarded as the carver of the stonework. If this kind of achievement can hardly be said to raise Christmas to the level of a sculptor as we understand the term, it is at least sufficient to base his claim as a statuary upon. Christmas was famous, too, for "bringing pageants and figures to such great perfection both in symmetry and substance, being before but misshapen monsters made only of slight wicker and paper";† and a copy of verses, of which Vertue is said to have possessed one, was circulated in praise of his success in this field of activity. He had two sons, John and Mathias Christmas, who were also sculptors and carvers, and who, among other works, executed the tomb of Sir H. Calthorpe, at Ampton, in Suffolk, and the busts of Ralph Hawtrey and his wife in white marble on their joint tomb in Ruislip Church,‡ and also did the

* I deal with him in this capacity in my "Lives of the British Architects."
† Gough's "Topography." ‡ *See* Lysons's "Middlesex."

carving on the large vessel which Peter Pett built, at Woolwich, in 1637.

Bernard Jansen, who is generally regarded as the principal architect of Northumberland House, on the frieze of which Christmas worked, seems also to have added to his labours, as an architect, those of a sculptor—that is, if the agreement, found by Vertue among the Harleian MSS.,* "between Paul Dewes Esq., and *Jan* Jansen, stonecutter, for setting up a tomb in the Church of Stowlangtoft," which agreement is dated June 25, 1624, refers to Bernard.

None of these sculptors was, however, of particular importance, and it is to *Nicholas Stone* that we must look for the man who was to represent adequately this branch of the art at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Nicholas Stone † was born at Woodbury, near Exeter, in the year 1586, and was the son of a quarryman. He passed his youth in his native village; but the attractions of London proved, later, irresistible, and, coming up to the Metropolis, he lived for a time with one Isaac James. We know nothing of this James, but it is probable that he was one of those lesser statuaries who did so much journeyman work, at this period, in connection with the embellishment of the great houses that then began to arise not only in London but also in the country. Stone was articled to Isaac James for two years, and remained with him one year longer, as a journeyman, as we learn from an entry in his note-books; but subsequently left him, and went to Holland, where he worked in the *atelier* of Peter de Keyser, the son of Hendrik de Keyser, the well-known sculptor, whose daughter he afterwards married. It seems probable that this Peter de Keyser was of the same family as Thomas de Keyser, the famous portrait-painter, but in what degree of relationship they stood it is neither easy, nor, perhaps, important here to determine. What does seem satisfactorily established, however, is that

* No. 8, Art. 15.

† *See* an interesting account of Stone, by Mr. A. E. Bullock, in which are reproduced many of Stone's known works and various ones attributed to him.

Stone had so improved upon the native talent which he undoubtedly possessed, by his studies and labours under the eyes of both Isaac James and Peter de Keyser (he is said to have designed and built the porch of the Westerkerk at Amsterdam, and so gained his master's consent to his union with his daughter, and thus to have come into a share in certain stone quarries in the Isle of Portland, in which de Keyser had an interest), that, when he returned to England, in 1614, he was at once, to use Walpole's words, "employed in making monuments for persons of the first distinction."

The chief source of information we have for following the details of Stone's career, are his pocket-books, in which he kept an account of the work he executed, of the amounts he received for these labours, and of those for whom the works were carried out. These pocket-books are preserved in the Soane Museum, whence the various extracts here given are taken. It would appear that these valuable and particularly interesting relics once belonged to Hawksmoor, the architect, and they afterwards came into the possession of Vertue, who purchased them at the sale of the library of James Paine, the architect. They were copied more than once, however, for Walpole tells us that Captain Winde, who built Buckingham House among other things, possessed a copy, while another was discovered by Vertue, from which Walpole gave some extracts in his "Anecdotes of Painting."* The first entry dates from 1614, the year when, as we have seen, Stone returned from Holland, and set up for himself as a sculptor in London. But curiously enough his earliest undertaking, in these new conditions, was not in England at all, but in Ireland. Here is Stone's record of it:

"In June, 1614, I bargained with Sir Walter Butler for to make a tomb for the Earl of Ormon(de), and to set it up in Iarland; for the wich I had well paid me £100 in hand, and £130 when the work was set up at Killkenny in Iarland."

* The extracts given by Walpole do not always tally with those in the original MS., from which I have taken my references direct.

We shall observe here and in the other extracts from Stone's note-books, that the prices he received for his work were, considering the times, extraordinarily high. This, to some extent, indicates the important position already attained by him in this kind of work, of which he seems to have had almost a monopoly; but, at the same time, it must be remembered that such sums as were paid him, included not merely the cost of material—no small item when we know that alabaster and frequently rare marbles figured in the tombs of this period, many of which were also emblazoned with the armorial bearings of the deceased person—but also the incidental expenses of carriage, setting up, and, in many cases, the necessary brick foundations for the monuments. The next work on which Stone was engaged was the tomb of Henry Howard, Lord Northampton, in Dover Castle, since removed: "1615. Agreed with Mr. Grefen for to mak a Tomb for my lord of Northampton and to set it in dover castell for the wich I had £500 well payed. I mad master Isak James a partner with me in courtisy, becas he was my master 3 years, that was, 2 years of my prentes (prentice) and on year journiman." This reference to his old master, James, shows that Stone's connection with him must have been a friendly and satisfactory one, and also indicates that the pupil retained a kindly feeling for one whom he had distanced in the race for fame and wealth.

Besides this tomb in Dover Castle, Stone was occupied during the year on two other works of considerable importance: one being the tomb of Bodley at Oxford; the other the splendid monument which he set up to Sutton's memory in the chapel of the Charterhouse. The references to these two undertakings in the sculptor's note-books run thus:

"In May 1615, I did set up a tombe for Ser Thomas Bodly in Oxford, for wich Mr. Hacwell of lencons end (Lincoln's Inn) payed me £100 good money."

"In November 1615 Mr. Janson in Southwork and I did set up a tombe for Mr. Sottone (Sutton) at Charter-

hous, for the wich we had £400, well payed, but the letell (little) monement of Mr. Lawes was included, the wich I mad and all the carven work of Mr. Sutton's tombe."

Jansen, whom we have before met with, here probably designed the general outlines of the monument—the architectual portion of the work, in short—while Stone did the actual sculpture with which it is so richly embellished.

Other works dating from this year were the tombs of Lady Bennet in York Minster; of Sir Thomas Campbell, in the Old Jewry; of Sir Thomas Selby (spelt by Stone, Sellbee) and his wife at Newcastle, executed in Caen stone and costing £600; and a tomb and chimney-piece for Sir Henry Bellasys (Bellasess) at York.

In the following year Stone produced a tomb for Sir Roger Wilbraham, at Hadley, near Barnet, and at this time we first find the sculptor employed on a royal commission. "In July, 1616," says he, "was I sent into Scotland at Edenborrowe, whar I undertook to do work in the king's chapel and for the king's closet, and the organ, so much as cam to £450 of weniscot-work, the wich I parformed and had my mony well payed, and £50 was geven to drenk, wharof I had £20 geven me by the king's comand."

It is not specifically stated in which of the royal palaces this work was done; but I think it likely that it was at Holyrood. The £50 "to drink," as Stone quaintly puts it, may be regarded as an honorarium over and above the stipulated price of the work, bestowed on Stone and those employed under him, as a mark of the royal satisfaction with the undertaking.

In the same year Stone was employed to execute a monument for that famous Lucy Harrington, wife of Edward, Earl of Bedford, whom Donne celebrates, and to whom May dedicated his translation of Lucan's "Pharsalia," and who was the great patroness of learning in her time, appreciating the value of wit far more than she did the value of money. The tomb executed for her is thus referred to by Stone:

"1616. A bargen mad with Mr. Chambers for the ues (use) *i.e.* on behalf, of the Right Honourerablle Luce Contes of Bedford, for on (one) far (fair) and statly tombe of Touch (touchstone) and whit marbell for har father and mother and brother and sister, for the wich I was to have £1020, and my lady was to stand at all charges for caregs, (carriage) and Iron and setting up."

By this we see that this very large sum of money was paid to Stone simply for his carving of the tomb and the actual material used by him in this portion of it. So far as I can learn he never received anything like such an amount for a tomb on any other occasion, and that he did so, in this instance, forms a significant commentary on what we know of the light-hearted extravagance of the noble lady for whom he undertook it, and of whom Walpole says that, notwithstanding she was a great heiress, she dissipated both her own and her husband's fortune; not in riotous living, but in the splendid rewards it pleased her to bestow on the talent, whether in literature or the fine arts, of her day. No one who cares for either will be very ready, I think, to blame this princely though improvident largesse.

The year 1617 seems to have been a busy one for Stone, for he records in his note-book tombs to the following, as being executed at this time: notably to Sir Thomas Hayes, in Aldermanbury; Sir Robert Drury, in Hawsted Church; Alderman Anguish at Norwich (spelt Norwedge); Sir Thomas Hewar, at Emneth, Norfolk; Mr. James Palmer, at Enfield; and Alderman Stilles, in Lothbury.

The next important entry in the note-books is dated 1619, and refers to "A Bargen made with Ser Charles Morison of Cassebery (Cashiobury) in Harford Shear (Hertfordshire) for to mak a fare tomb of Alabaster and touchstone onely." Included in this commission was what Stone describes as "one pictor of whit marbell," by which he indicates a bust, for Sir Charles Morison's father, and one for his sister, Bridget Morison, the wife of Robert Ratcliffe, Earl of Sussex, "as great as the life,

of Alabaster, for the wich I had well payed £260, and four peces geven me to drenk."

In the same year we find the sculptor employed by the king on that magnificent Banqueting Hall which Inigo Jones had designed, and which formed merely a fragment (but what a lovely one!) of the splendid palace which the great architect had conceived.* The entry in Stone's note-books referring to this undertaking, and to some other work carried out for the king, reads as follows:

"1619, I was sent for to the ofisers of his maties, workes to undertake the charge of the plas of mstr mason for the new Banking Hows (Banqueting House) at Whithall, wharin I was inployed 2 years, and I had payed me 4*s.* 10*d.* the day, and I contened (continued) forth the plase the 3 year and 3*s.* 10*d.* the day: And in that year I made the diall at Sent (St.) James, the king finding ston and workmanshept ondly, and I had for it £6 13*s.* 4*d.* And I took down the fontayn at Thebelles (Theobald's), and set it up agean, and the fontayn at Nonsuch, and I was payd for both £48."

Stone also made a tomb for Sir Thomas Cornwallis at Portchester, near Portsmouth, and that of Dr. Wright, at Sonning-on-Thames, during 1619.

The following year was a full one for the sculptor, for besides the private work mentioned, he was engaged on carving the ornamental portions of the Banqueting Hall as well as superintending, in his capacity of master-mason, the building operations. Of these private commissions, no fewer than five were for monuments which were ordered to be erected in Westminster Abbey. The first entry for this year, however, refers to monuments he made in various country churches, thus: "1620. In Sufolke I mad a tombe for Ser Edmond Bacon's lady, and in the sam chearch (church) of Redgrave I mad onother for his sister Lady Gady (Gawdy) and was very well payed for thim, and in the sam plas I mad 2 pecttors (pictures) of whit marbell for Ser Nicholas Bakon and his

* *See* the author's "Lives of the British Architects" for details of Inigo Jones's proposed palace.

lady, and the(y) war layed upon the tombe that Barnard Janson had mad thar, for the which I was payd by Ser Edmond Bacon £200."

The monuments in the Abbey which are due to Stone's handiwork are those to Edmund Spenser, the poet (1616); to Francis Holles, son of Lord Clare (1622); to Sir George Holles (1626), brother of the same peer, who was well known for his share in the wars of the Netherlands, and who is depicted riding, in complete armour, with Pallas on one side and Bellona on the other; to Sir Richard Coxe (although this was only an "inscription") (1624); to Isaac Casaubon; to Sir George Villiers and his second wife, Mary Beaumont; and to Dudley Carleton and his first wife, Anne Garrod.

The monuments to Francis Holles and to Sir George Holles were erected by the Earl of Clare. The former commemorates Lord Clare's son who died at the age of eighteen in 1622, and who is represented as a Roman seated on a pedestal and clothed in armour; Stone was paid £50 for it. According to Dean Stanley the memorial to Sir George Holles, which stands on the site of the altar once dedicated to the Confessor's favourite saint, is "the first in the Abbey that stands erect; the first that wears not the costume of the time, but that of a Roman General; the first monument which, in its sculpture, reproduces the events in which the hero was engaged." It is of alabaster and cost £100. Its proximity to the famous Vere monument, and a rather cryptic entry in Stone's note-book, have led to the conclusion that Stone was responsible for the latter work; but there is no evidence of this being the case.

Stone received £200 for executing the monument to Dudley Carleton and his wife, and also had given him, for the sake, I suppose, of the materials, "an old monement that stood in the same places befor set up for his (Sir D. Carleton's) lady som 8 years befor."

The Villiers monument is the most considerable of Stone's work in the Abbey. It was erected in 1631 by the Mary Beaumont, wife of Sir George Villiers and afterwards created Countess of Buckingham, who also

lies beneath it. It is of white marble, and represents the husband and wife lying side by side, dressed in the costume of the period. It cost £560, and is alone sufficient to prove Stone's great capability for this particular kind of work: elaborate but at the same time well balanced, and exhibiting a very genuine conception of what a sepulchral monument should be.

The monument to Sir Richard Coxe was erected in 1624, at a cost of £30, while double that amount was paid for the Casaubon, set up, at the expense of the Bishop of Durham, in 1634.

As Stone's *ipsissima verba* are of particular interest, I will also give the entries from his note-books which refer to the above works. "I allso mad a monement for Mr. Spencer (*sic*) the pouett, and set it up at Westmiester, for the which the Contes of Dorsete payed me £40." "And on othar thar for Mr. Frances Holles, the yongest sonne of the Earle of Clare, for the wich the sayed Earell payed me for it £50." Referring to this monument Vertue conjectures that as the figure "is of most antique simplicity and beauty," the design was certainly given to Stone by the Earl; the implication being that the patron had seen something similar abroad and had engaged the sculptor to copy it. Vertue assumes this because, he says, Stone, "when left to himself had no idea of grace, as appears by the tomb of the Lytteltons at Oxford"—a tomb erected, as we shall see, in 1635. On the other hand, it seems to me that Stone was not by any means deficient in grace, and if the Lyttelton tomb may not be an example of it, those to Sutton and others certainly are.

Stone's next entry runs: "My Lord of Clare also agreed with me for a monument for his brother Sir George Holles, the which I made and sett up in the chappell at Westminster where Sir Francis Vere * lyeth buried, for the which I was payed from the hands of the said Earl of Clare £100." "And in the same church I made an inscription for Sir Richard Cox for the which I

* From a misreading of this entry, it has sometimes been erroneously thought that Stone executed the Vere monument, as I have before remarked.

had £30." "And another fast by for Monsieur Casabon, the Lord Bishop of Durham payed for it £60."

Although these entries immediately succeed one dated 1620, these tombs were not all produced in this year. As we have seen, in fact, by a subsequent entry, it would seem that their execution extended over two or three years; but during that time Stone was occupied on other work; notably, in 1622 on the "great Diall" which he made for the Privy Garden, at Whitehall, and for which he received £46; the "diall" he carved for Lord Brooke's garden in Holborn,* the payment of which was, however, only £8 10*s.*, so that it was apparently but a small thing; the "two statues of an old man and a woman and a diall" which he executed for Sir John Davies of Chelsea, at a cost of £7 apiece; and the tomb of Mrs. Donne, wife of the famous Dr. Donne, and the heroine, if she may be so called, of the well-known ghost story which will be for ever as much connected with the Doctor's name as will his poetical excursions. This monument was erected in the church of St. Clement's Danes, and Stone tells us that he received for it "fifteen pieces."

It may be assumed that these labours represented, together with his work at Whitehall, the bulk of his activity from 1620 to 1625. In the latter year we find him employed by the Corporation in beautifying the old Exchange (the predecessor of Jarman's Royal Exchange) with certain royal statues. "About this time (1625)," he writes, "I mad for the old Exchange in London 4 status, the one Edward the 5, Richard the 3, and Henry the 7; for these 3 I had £25 a pecs (piece), and on for Queenne Elizabeth, which was taken don and set up agean wha now it standeth at Guildhall gat, for the which I had £30."

The accession of Charles I., a prince so enlightened in all that concerned the fine arts, gave a fresh impetus to Stone's activity so far as concerned his connection with the royal works, and under date of April 21, 1626, the

* *See* account of Brooke House in the author's "Private Palaces of London."

following "grant of the office of master-mason and architect," was made to him. I give the instrument in its entirety, as it appears in Rymer's "Fœdera." *

"Charles, by the grace of God King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith &c. To all whom these presents shall come, greeting.

"Know yee that wee, of our especiill grace, certaine knowledge and meere motion, and for divers other good causes and considerations us at this present moveing, have given and graunted and, by these presents, for us our heirs and successors, doe give and graunte to our trusty and wel-beloved servaunt Nicholas Stone the office and place of our Master Mason and Architect for all our buildings and reparations within our hous and castle of Windsor, and him the said Nicholas Stone, our said Master Mason and Architect for all our said buildings and reparations within our hous and castle of Windsor aforesaid, wee doe make, ordaine constitute and appoint by these presents. To have hold execute and enjoy the said office and place of our Master Mason and Architect for all our buildings and reparations within our hous or castle of Windsor aforesaid, to the said Nicholas Stone, by himself, or his sufficient deputy and deputies, for and dureing the terme of his naturall life. And further, of our more ample grace, certaine knowledge and mere motion, wee have given and graunted, and by these presents, for us our heirs and successors, we doe give and graunt to the said Nicholas Stone for the executing of the said office and place, the wages and fee of twelve pence of lawfull money of England by the day, in as large and ample manner as William Suthis † or any other person or persons heretofore, having executed and enjoyed the said office and place, hath had or ought to have had and enjoyed; to have and yearely to receive the said wages and fee of twelve pence by the daye, to the said Nicholas

* Vol. xviii. p. 675.

† Suthis had been master-mason of Windsor Castle. He was a citizen and goldsmith of London, and is buried (having died October 5, 1625) at Lambeth. His epitaph, put up by his wife, is given in Aubrey's "History of Surrey," vol. v. p. 248.

Stone and his assignes, from the day of the date of these presents, for and dureing the naturall life of him the said Nicholas Stone, out of the treasure of us our heirs and successors, by the hands of the treasorer and chamberlains of us our heires and successors there for the time being, at the fower usuall feasts at termes of the yeare, that is to say, at the feasts of the Nativitie, of Saint John Baptist, Saint Michael the Archangell, the Birth of our Lord God, and the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by even and equall portions yearlie to be paid, together with all other profitts commodities and allowances to the same office and place due, incident or in anie wise appertayneing, in as lardge and ample manner as the said William Suthis or any other person or persons heretofore haveing executed and enjoyed the said office hath had, or ought to have had and enjoyed.

"In witnesse whereof &c.

"Witnesse our selfe at Westminster, the one and twentieth daye of Aprill."

As we have no record of any particular work undertaken by Stone for his royal patron, it seems probable that such as he may have been engaged on at Windsor Castle was only in the nature of such necessary repairs and renovations as would be necessary for the proper upkeep of such a vast pile.

Indeed, the remaining entries in the sculptor's note-books are solely concerned with what he did for private people. Thus, we learn that, in 1629, he made a tomb for Lady Paston of Norfolk, "and set it up at Paston, and was very extraordinarily entertained there, and payed for it £340"; and in the same year carved the piers, "of good Portland stone to hang a pair of great wooden gates," of the famous gates at Holland House which had been designed by Inigo Jones, and which may still be seen there. For these Stone received £100.* Two years later he completed the splendid monument, for the Countess of Buckingham in Westminster Abbey, to which I have before referred.

* There is, however, no record of this payment in the note-books.

But a still better-known example of Stone's work was executed in the same year (1631). This was that remarkable and curious monument to Dr. Donne which stood, and still stands, though much dilapidated, in St. Paul's, and whose outlines we know from the print of it which forms the frontispiece to Donne's "Sermons." It represents Dr. Donne, as he appeared in his winding-sheet, and is one of the few monuments which escaped destruction during the Great Fire.

Walton, in his life of Donne, thus refers to the statue: "A monument being resolved upon, Dr. Donne sent for a carver to make for him in wood the figure of an urn, giving him directions for the compass and height of it; and to bring with it a board, of the just height of his body. These being got, then without delay a choice painter was got to be in readiness to draw his picture, which was taken as followeth: Several charcoal fires being first made in his large study, he brought with him into that place his winding-sheet in his hand, and having put off all his clothes, had this sheet put on him, and so tied with knots at his head and feet, and his hands so placed as dead bodies are usually fitted, to be shrouded and put into their coffin, or grave. Upon this urn he thus stood, with his eyes shut, and with so much of the sheet turned aside as might show his lean, pale, and death-like face. . . . In this posture he was drawn up his just height; and when the picture was fully finished, he caused it to be set by his bed-side, where it continued, and became his hourly object till his death, and was then given to his dearest friend and executor, Dr. Henry King, then chief residentiary of St. Paul's, who caused him to be thus carved in one entire piece of white marble, as it now stands in that church."

The entry in Stone's note-books, referring to this work, runs thus:

"In 1631, I mad a tomb for Dr. Done, and sett it up in St. Palles London, for the which I was payed by Dr. Montford the sum of £120. I tooke £60 in platt, in partt of payement."

The last remark—that Stone took plate in part pay-

ment for the tomb—seems to indicate that he was now a well-to-do man, who could, on occasion, dispense with a monetary return for his labours.

We have seen Stone engaged on the tomb of Lady Paston in 1629, and in 1632 we again find him doing a large amount of work for this family—once a famous one in Norfolk, but now, as it has been for long, extinct. The sculptor thus notices this fresh commission :

" 1632. I mad a chemny-pece for Mr. Paston, set up at Oxnete in Norfolk, and for the which I had £80, and on statue of Venee (Venus) and Cupet (Cupid), and had £30 for it ; and 1 statue of Jupeter £25, and the 3-headed dog Serbros (Cerberus) with a petestall £14, and Senes (Ceres), on Harcules and Marcury £50, and a tomb for my lady Ketren (Catherine) his dear wife £200, and a letell chemny-pecce in a banking-hows £30, and on *Ranes* marbell tabell with a foot £15, and divres other things sent don to him from time to time, as paintings, arms, &c. And in May, 1641 sent to him 3 statues, the on Appollow (*sic*), Deano (Diana), and Juno. Agreed for £25 a pacs (piece), with petestalls."

From this we see that Mr. Paston was one of Stone's most consistent patrons, for if the individual prices mentioned are not particularly munificent, at the same time Paston ordered many more works from the sculptor than did any one else, so far, at least, as we can gather from Stone's own records, which ought to be conclusive. Walpole states that the statues of Hercules and Mercury, mentioned above, were, on the death of the last member of the house of Paston, sold to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, and were in his (Walpole's) day at Blickling, where it is probable they still are.

Two years after he had set up these various statues and chimney-pieces, at Oxnete, *i.e.* in 1634, Stone executed a chimney-piece for Sir John Holland, of Quidenham (which the sculptor gives as Godnon), in Norfolk, for which he received £200 ; and in the following year he produced the not very successful tomb for the two sons of Sir Thomas Lyttelton. These brothers were drowned at

Oxford, and the monument was set up in Magdalen College, where they were undergraduates. The price paid for the work was only £30.

I may mention here that Stone executed some other work in the University. Thus he built the great gate of St. Mary's Church, with its beautiful twisted columns,* as well as the stone piers at the entrance to the Physic Garden † which had been designed by Inigo Jones; and were a commission to Stone from the Earl of Danby, for whom he acted as architect on other occasions; while the tomb of Dr. Barker, in New College, which cost £50, also came from his hand.

Walpole gives a *résumé* of some of the other work for which Stone was responsible, and as this not only shows the extent of his labours, but also the large area over which many of them are scattered, I will give the list, together with the prices received for each commission, although some of the work has been referred to before:

"For Lady Bennet at York, £35. Sir Roger Wilbraham at Hadley, by Barnet, £80. Sir Thomas Hayes in Aldermanbury, £100. Sir Robert Drury at Hasteed (Hawstead) by Bury, £140. Alderman Anguish at Norwich £20. Sir Thomas Ewer at Lynn, £95. Lady Cary, mother of Lord Danvers, at Stow, Northamptonshire, £220. Mr. Molesworth at Croyland, £23. Mrs. Palmer at Enfield, £16. Sir Thomas Cornwallis, groom-porter, at Portchester, £18. Mr. Cornwallis of Suffolk, £16. Sir Thomas Monson's father and mother, set up two miles beyond Lincoln. For Sir Edmund Paston, £100. Sir Charles Morrison and his Lady in the Chancel at Watford, £400. Sir George Copen at St. Martin's, £40. Lord Knevett at Stanwall, Middlesex, £215. Sir Adam Niton (Newton) at Charlton by Greenwich, £180. Sir Hum-

* I cannot agree with Dallaway, who says he introduced this sort of pillar (said to have been brought from Jerusalem to Rome) *with the worst effect*, at St. Mary's.

† "In 1631. Agreed wh. the Right Hon. Lord Earell of Danby for to mak 3 ston gattes in to the phiseck garden Oxford and to desine a new Hows for him at Corenbury," is Stone's record of this work; the reference to Cornbury indicates that he also occasionally fulfilled the functions of an architect to private people as well as to the Crown.

phrey Lee at Acton-Bromwell, £66. Sir Thomas Palmer at Winam, Kent, £100. Sir Thomas Meary at Walthamstow, £50. Sir William Stonehouse at Radley, Oxfordshire, £120. Sir Richard and Lady Verney at Compton Verney, £90. Mr. Cook and his wife at Brampton, Suffolk, £130. Sir Julius Caesar in St. Helen's, London, £110. Lord and Lady Spencer at Althorp, £600 (executed in 1638). Lord Chief Justice Coke, at Tittleshall, £400. Sir Thomas Puckering, at Warwick, £200. Judge Hatton at St. Dunston's by Temple Bar, £40. Sir J. Worsnom at Stanmore, £200; and a porch to the new church there, £30."

Although this is a considerable list, it does not exhaust Stone's activity in this phase of his work, and there are many other monuments of lesser account and of less notable people which we know, by his own record, that he executed, although he has not troubled to give the places where they were set up.

I have mentioned that Stone acted as a practical architect to Lord Danby, and we find the fruits of this excursion into an alien although an allied art in the house at Cornbury, which he designed, in 1631, for the Earl, for which work, as well as the directing of the necessary labour, which extended over two years, he received £1000. In 1638, he also designed Tart Hall, which stood rather to the south of the present Buckingham Palace, for the Countess of Arundel, and various entries notifying receipts of money to pay the workmen, are included in the notebook. His last undertakings in pure sculpture, as they may be termed, included the tomb he erected for Viscount Dorchester, in Westminster Abbey, in 1640, where he had set up a memorial to Lady Dorchester some years before; a monument to Judge Hutton in St. Dunstan's, and one to Sir John Worsnom in Stanmore Church. A nephew of Stone's, one Charles Stoakes, cast up the complete amounts which the sculptor received for his monumental work, and the total reached the very respectable sum of £10,889.

Besides the perennial work going on at Windsor, Stone seems to have been employed at other of the royal palaces,

and the figure of the Nile on the steps at Somerset House was executed by him—(its companion being the work of one of his pupils, who became his son-in-law, one Kerne, or Kearne, a German)—while he also did certain subsidiary work at Richmond.

Stone died in Long Acre,* on August 24, 1647, aged sixty-one, and was buried, four days later, in the Church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, on the north wall of which was the following epitaph, surmounted by his head in profile: "To the lasting memory of Nicholas Stone, Esq., Master Mason to his Majesty, in his life-time esteemed for his knowledge in sculpture and architecture, which his works in many parts do testify, and, though made for others, prove monuments of his fame. He departed this life on the 24th of August 1647, aged sixty-one, and lyeth buried near the pulpit in this church. Mary his wife and Nicholas his son, lye also buried in the same grave. She died November 19th, and he on the 17th of September 1647. H(enry) S(tone), posuit."

"We owe," says Dallaway, "to Nicholas Stone, the full praise of having deviated with more success than his immediate predecessors, from the stiff and Gothic style, yet his approaches towards classic grace were distant. During the time of his practice, the French, Flemings, or Italians brought to England, sometimes the manner of Gougeon or Pilon, sometimes a debased imitation of John of Bologna, and sometimes the taste of Bernini, but never a pure style nor sound principles." †

The force of heredity is well exemplified in the case of Nicholas Stone and his children; for his three sons Henry, Nicholas, and John all followed in their father's

* There is extant a deed, dated June 5, 1636, being a conveyance of a piece of ground from Francis, Earl of Bedford, to "Nicholas Stone, Esq., of the Parish of St. Martins in the Fields; Master Mason to the King." This land is described as being part of Covent Garden and Long Acre, and extended back to a piece of ground in the tenancy of the Countess of Anglesey and a piece of ground occupied by the Earl of Pembroke's stables.—*Notes and Queries*, 5th series.

† I may mention that Stone published his "Enchiridion of Fortification" in 1645, a further exemplification of his versatility.

footsteps as sculptors, although the youngest had been originally intended for the Church.

Henry Stone, who erected the monument to his father, mother, and brother, as we have seen, carried on the statuary's business with John, although it is as a painter, and particularly as a copyist of Vandyck, and others, that he is best known: such works by "Old Stone," as he was called, probably, as Walpole conjectures, to distinguish him from his brother John, being regarded as excellent in technique and verisimilitude.* But Henry does not seem to have allowed his penchant for painting to interfere with the conduct of what had been, in his father's hands, an art, but can only, perhaps, be described, as carried on by him and his brother, as a lucrative business.

In imitation of their father's custom, the brothers kept a record of work done by them; and, although such work did not, of course, approach the elder man's output in importance or extent, we gather from these notes, that as statuaries, Henry and John were not unsuccessful.

One of these entries reads thus: "In the year of Our Lord 1653, my brother and I made a tomb for the Lord Ashley, for which we had £60." But that this was not their first excursion into the sculptor's business on their own account, is proved by another entry, in which John says: "Formerly I made a little tomb of white marble, being an eagle with an escutcheon upon his breast, sett up at Sunning in Berkshire, for £7." † This is not dated, but a somewhat similar undertaking in London is, for we read: "In Ano. 1656 I sett up a little tomb in the Temple Church for Sir John Williams, and had for it £10. It was an eagle of white marble."

Beyond these entries only fifteen other monuments are recorded, and for the most important of these not more than £100 was paid, and generally the prices ranged, as in the extracts I have given, at very insignificant amounts. Among the works executed by the brothers, but chiefly

* In the National Portrait Gallery are copies by him of Vandyck's portraits of Charles I., Inigo Jones, Laud, and Lord Northumberland.

† This was to the memory of Mrs. Clarke.

by John, who kept a diary like his father, I find a little monument for Sir F. Mansell in St. Gregory by St. Paul's, for which he received £20; tombs for Sir Edward Skewer at Brington, near Althorp; Mrs. Blosse at Belstead, near Norwich; Sir John Bankes at Christ Church, Oxford; Mr. Martyn at Putney; Sir John Higham at Barrow, Suffolk; Mr. Baron at Heisett, Suffolk; Col. Osborn at Campton, Beds; and Mr. Creswell in Newbattle Church, Northamptonshire. It is obvious, did we require such evidence, that the work of the sons was in no way comparable to that of the father. Indeed, as I have said, Henry Stone's heart was in painting rather than in sculpture.

The house, with its garden and yard, situated in Long Acre, which had been originally in the occupation of Nicholas Stone, was continued on by his sons, and they paid £10 per annum rent to the Crown in respect of it, as appears, according to Vertue, by the survey made by the Commissioners in 1650.

Henry Stone's* death occurred on August 24, 1653. He was buried near his father in St. Martin's Church, on August 27, where a monument was erected to his memory by his brother John, who apparently wrote the long rhyming inscription which commemorated the dead man's qualities and gifts; perhaps the concluding lines, which run :

> Thy names a monument that will surpass
> The Parian marble or Corinthian brass,

indicate that the former outweighed the latter considerably.†

John Stone, who erected this memorial, "to perfect his fraternal relations," as is stated on the stone, hardly requires a more extended notice. He was originally intended for the Church, but on the outbreak of the Civil Wars took arms on the king's side, and even published a work on fortification, in which the illustrations were etched by himself. It seems probable that he was engaged later, although it must have been in a subsidiary

* There is a book of sketches by him in the Soane Museum.

† His portrait was painted by Lely.

way, in the sculptor's business; but he never made any individual mark in it, and he died while yet a relatively young man. He had gone to Breda to petition Charles II. for the post of master-mason or surveyor to the Crown, but was seized with an illness, from which he eventually succumbed, at Holy Cross Hospital, Winchester, in September 1667.

On the other hand, *Nicholas*, the second son, showed more promise in this direction, and might, had he lived, have successfully carried on the work of his father; for we are told that in Italy, whither he was sent in his youth with his brother Henry, in 1638 to be precise, he modelled after the antiques so well that his works were sometimes mistaken for those of the best Italian sculptors;* a "Laocoön," once in the possession of Bird, the sculptor, and a copy of Bernini's (he worked for a time under the great man) "Apollo and Daphne," being particularly successful. Death, however, cut short his activity, for, having returned to this country in 1642, he died five years later—in the same year, indeed, as his father.

Nicholas Stone, junr., kept a diary,† during the residence of his brother and himself in Italy, and in it he speaks of being employed, while at Rome, on a monument of Lady Berkeley. This work, described by Lysons‡ as "the figure of the lady in a shroud, well executed in *alto relievo*, in white marble," is at Cranford, where Lady Berkeley was buried, and is supposed to have been the sculptor's earliest performance in Bernini's school.

Two other entries from Stone's diary are so interesting as throwing light on his connection with Bernini that I will transcribe them here.§ They are as follows:

"Oct. 26, 1638. Arrived at Rome, waited, on Car. Bernini at St. Peters. He favoured me so far as to show me the statue he had under hand, in the Church, and told me, that for a while, he should be busy there, but

* Walpole.
† An abstract of this is in the Soane Museum.
‡ "Middlesex Parishes," p. 25.
§ Harleian MSS. (No. 4049).

when he had done, and that he was at his house, I should be welcome to spend my time with other of his disciples."

"Dec. 1638. I went to Saint Peters, and with me Car. Bernini from the church to his home; and I showed him some drawings that I had copyed after Raphael's, with three or foure of architecture of my own *capriccio*—he was very well pleased to see them, and told me that in 15 dayes time he should have finished the statue then under hand, and then if I would come to him he would have practise upon some things that he had, and I should see his manner of working, and then worke, myselfe: in the mean time, he says, 'I would advise you, as you have begun, to continue to draw with chalke, which is very necessary.'" *

When, in 1699, Charles Stoakes, a kinsman of the Stones, repaired their respective monuments in St. Martin's Church, he caused the following inscription to be set up beneath them:

Four rare Stones are gone,
The Father and three sons;

which shows, if nothing else, at least that Stoakes's feeling of kinship was stronger than his feeling for rhyme.†

Nicholas Stone, the elder, had several workmen, or pupils, of whom John Schurman and Andrew Kearne, about whom I must say something, were the best; such men as *John Hargrave*, who is recorded by Stone himself, as having made a statue of Sir Edward Coke for £15, and the statue for the monument of Lord Spencer; *Richard White*, who executed the statue of Lady Spencer for the same tomb; and *Humphrey Mayor*, who "finisht the statue for Dr. Donne's monument," for which he received £8, being merely journeymen statuaries who worked under Stone, but who do not seem to have caught anything of his ability; at least we hear nothing more of them after the death of their master.

We know little enough of *Andrew Kearne*, or *Kerne*, except that he was the brother-in-law of Nicholas Stone,

* A volume of sketches by Nicholas is preserved in the Soane Museum.

† Portraits of the Stones are in Walpole's "Anecdotes," ed. 1798.

the elder, and that he worked for that sculptor. The best part of what he did is thus incorporated in the output of the more illustrious man. But Vertue has luckily been able to record one or two monuments as well as certain other work which Kearne produced alone. Thus we learn that the River God which formed a companion to the figure of Nile, executed by Stone, for Somerset House stairs, was carved by Kearne, who also produced the lioness on the top of the famous York Water-Gate designed by Inigo Jones for the Duke of Buckingham. Kearne also made a Venus and Apollo, in Portland stone, each six feet high, for the Countess of Mulgrave, but as he only received seven pounds apiece for these statues, it is evident that his reputation as a sculptor did not stand very high. One other undertaking is recorded by him, notably a series of statues which he carved as decorations for Lamport Hall, near Northampton, belonging to Sir Justinian Isham, the Royalist and cultivated patron of art, who died in 1674. Even the date of Kearne's death is unknown, but this occurred in England, where he left a son who, according to Walpole, was living in the beginning of the eighteenth century.*

John Schurman, another of Stone's pupils, is almost as illusive as Kearne, but we do know that he was born at Embden, although the date of that event has not been preserved, and that after working for Stone, he set up on his own account, and, from certain facts that are recorded, was apparently not unsuccessful. At least I think this may be assumed from the record of work he did, and his patrons, although neither were, it seems, very numerous. Anyhow he received encouragement, and what was better, commissions, from Sir John Baskerville, and he is recorded as having executed "two shepherds sitting, for Sir John Danvers of Chelsea." More interesting, however, is it to know that he made a marble statue of Sir Thomas Lucy, for his tomb at Charlcote, for which he received £18, with an additional 50*s.* for polishing and glazing the work. Just as Kearne's prices

* For Kearne, see Vertue's MS., Brit. Mus.; Add. MSS. 23069.

seem to have been about £7 for a carved figure, so Schurman's ranged apparently from about £16 to £18, which, if such prices indicate anything, would seem to point to the latter as being the more successful artist. I suppose this to have been the recognised rate of payment, as Schurman received £18 for a statue on the tomb of Douglas, Lord Belhaven, in Holyrood House Chapel, for which he also carved the figure of a little boy; while for a statue, representing Hercules and Antæus, for Sir John Danvers, he was paid "at the rate of £16." With a pair of sphinxes, probably for the tops of stone or brick gate-posts, which he carved for the same patron, we exhaust what little we know of Schurman's productions.

Although Nicholas Stone, with his sons and his pupils, seems to have enjoyed the chief patronage of the reigns of James I. and Charles I., there were several other sculptors who will have to be mentioned in the following chapter, one of whom at least—Hubert Le Sœur—was a man of consummate ability far in advance of anybody who appeared, whether native or foreign, in this country during that time.

That there must have been many other men who worked conscientiously and well during this period, is proved by the number of elaborate monuments, and mural tablets (many of which are not without charm and distinction), which may be seen in the churches throughout the land. Certain of these can be identified as being the work of Stone and his assistants, through the good thought of the sculptor in keeping a systematic record of his productions; but by far the larger number can never be allocated to any particular artist (for the fashion of carving the name of the sculptor on the monument had not then come into fashion), and we can only admire these, frequently defaced, remains, and regret our ignorance of the hand that produced them.

HUBERT LE SŒUR

CHAPTER III

HUBERT LE SŒUR, FANELLI, EDWARD PIERCE, AND OTHERS

NOTWITHSTANDING the impetus given to the fine arts in this country by Charles I., and in a lesser degree by such munificent patrons as the Earl of Arundel and the Duke of Buckingham, it is a sad fact that the chief sculptor of this reign was a foreigner who, although he was domiciled in this country, can after all only be regarded as one of its acquired glories. It is also curious that of the work done by this fine sculptor, only a relatively few specimens exist, or at least have been identified as his; and his name is only generally known in connection with the beautiful statue of Charles I., which stands facing Whitehall. As, however, this remarkable piece of work may, I think, without fear of contradiction be regarded as the finest statue we possess in London (although, considering some of those which we see around us, this does not suggest so much as one could wish), it is alone sufficient to prove that in Le Sœur we had a man who may be termed in the best sense of the word, a classic artist; one, head and shoulders above his contemporaries, and fitted to take his stand on an equality with most of the great sculptors of modern times.

Hubert Le Sœur was born in 1595 at Paris. We know next to nothing about him until he became a pupil of the famous John of Bologna,* and proved, by his subsequent work, that he was a worthy disciple of the great sculptor whose "David with the Head of Goliath" may be regarded as one of the masterpieces in this art, which have come down to us.

It is rather uncertain when Le Sœur came to England,

* Born 1524, died 1608.

but it is probable that it was about 1628; certainly he was in this country in 1630; attracted hither, we may suppose, by the knowledge that a monarch at last sat on the throne of Great Britain, who understood art and loved it for its own sake, and who had set a fashion which his court, and to some extent his people, were anxious to follow. It seems therefore appropriate that one of Le Sœur's first undertakings, after his arrival here, was the execution of the equestrian statue of the king himself. This statue, in which, as Walpole remarks, "the commanding grace of the figure and exquisite form of the horse are striking to the most unpractised eye," is known to have been cast in 1633, on a piece of ground close to the spot where the church of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, now stands. It will be remembered that it was about the same time that Inigo Jones was commissioned by the Earl of Bedford to erect this place of worship for the use of the tenants on his estate; and it is interesting to think that the greatest architect of the day was superintending the building of what he called "the handsomest barn in England," while, close by, one of the finest sculptors of the time was putting the finishing touches to the statue that was to stand as such a memorable monument of his achievement.

It has been generally supposed that Le Sœur's work was a commission from Lord Arundel. This supposition has been fostered by Walpole, who states that the Earl's family possessed receipts showing by whom and for whom it was cast. But, as a matter of fact, it was the Lord Treasurer Weston, afterwards Earl of Cranfield, who ordered the statue, and who intended it as a decoration for his garden at Roehampton. The agreement* between Weston and the sculptor, dated January 16, 1630, provided for "the casting of a horse in brasse, bigger than a great horse by a foot; and the figure of His Ma^y^ King Charles proportionable, full six foot." Further it was agreed that Le Sœur should discuss the question of the horse with "His Majesty's riders of great horses," which proves that the sculptor took every care

* The agreement is given in full by Dallaway in his edition of Walpole.

to make the work complete and lifelike. The price agreed to be paid was £600, which incidentally shows how great was Le Sœur's reputation at this time, for the sum was, for those days, a very handsome one; although it included everything connected with the work: "for the full finishing the same in copper, and setting it in the place where it is to stand." The time given for its completion was eighteen months.*

Le Sœur's name and the date, 1633, are inscribed on the near forefoot of the horse, which proves that the work was completed by that year. This being so, it is curious that it had not been erected when the Civil War broke out, as it indicates that it had remained on the sculptor's hands for some nine or ten years. No adequate reason has ever been forthcoming to account for this delay in setting it up in Weston's grounds at Roehampton. Perhaps it did not please him, but if so he must have been more dead to artistic merit than one would have supposed possible; or some disagreement may have occurred between him and the sculptor. Whatever was the reason—and there seems little chance of now discovering what it was—the statue was *not* erected, and, having been annexed by the Parliament—though on what pretext, it would be interesting to know, as it was not a Crown possession—it was sold, as so much material, to one John Rivett, or Rivet, a brazier living at The Dial, near Holborn Conduit. We do not know how much Rivett gave for the masterpiece, but we do know that it was disposed of to him on the strict condition that it was to be broken up. Rivett is certainly known to have sold a large number of fragments of brass, ostensibly portions of the statue, to those who wished for some memento of fallen royalty, but when the Restoration was an accomplished fact, the horse and rider emerged intact from the brazier's

* There is an apocryphal story told to the effect that the sculptor, on the completion of the work, challenged any one to find a blemish in it, and that, upon its being pointed out that there were no saddle-girths, Le Sœur was so overcome by mortification that he committed suicide. But the saddle-girths are there, although they are certainly not very noticeable except on a close inspection.

cellars, where they had been carefully hidden during the Commonwealth.

Kennett, who, in his Register for 1660, mentions the reappearance of the statue, states that the Earl of Portland, the son of Lord Treasurer Weston, made a formal application for its restitution to him, which shows, at least, that his father had duly paid Le Sœur for the work. This application was granted, but Rivett not unnaturally opposed it, showing that he had purchased the work from Parliament. The matter remained *sub judice* till 1674, when an arrangement was come to, by which Rivett gave up the statue, probably for some consideration; and Lord Portland must also have waived his claim to it, for instead of being handed over to him, it was placed in its present position—a position selected as having been that on which Queen Eleanor's Cross originally stood, and where, but a few years before the statue's erection here, Harrison and other regicides had been executed.

The statue, although practically remaining as it left Le Sœur's hands, has lost one or two of its minor features: thus the George which hung round the king's neck has disappeared, the hole from which it was suspended being still visible; while the sword with its buckles and straps was stolen in 1810, and if, as seems probable, they were recovered and re-fixed, they disappeared again, this time finally, in 1844, on the occasion of Queen Victoria's State visit to the City, to open the Royal Exchange.

It has been sometimes stated that Grinling Gibbon carved the beautiful stone pedestal on which the statue stands, but it was really the work of Joshua Marshall, Master Mason to the Crown, who also executed the decorations on Temple Bar. Marshall may thus be regarded in the light of a sculptor, but it is not, of course, improbable that Gibbon may have contributed the design, which certainly is worthy of him, especially as Marshall is not (with the exception stated) otherwise known as being anything beyond an official craftsman. It is interesting to remember that Sir Christopher Wren

STATUE OF CHARLES I.
By Le Sœur

also made a design for the base, not dissimilar from that used by Marshall, and that the great architect superintended the erection of the statue.

I have spoken rather in detail about this fine work, because one can hardly know too much concerning a statue which is one of the few really classical monuments (did not one remember that of James II. by Grinling Gibbon, one might even say, the only one) to be seen in the streets of London. The beauty and grace of its proportions; the dignity of the figure, the accuracy and knowledge with which the horse is modelled, added, of course, to the fascinating personality which, with all his faults and shortcomings, the monarch possessed, as

> Comely and calm he rides
> Hard by his own Whitehall,

will combine to make this beautiful work of art one of the most attractive and interesting memorials in London.

Only relatively few examples of Le Sœur's consummate art are known in this country: for instance, the statue in brass of William, Earl of Pembroke, at Oxford, presented to the University by one of his descendants; the monument, in black marble, with a fine bronze bust, to Sir Thomas Richardson, the judge, in Westminster Abbey, which is inscribed "Hubert Le Sœur Regis Sculptor faciebat, 1635"; and the bust in bronze of Lady Cottington, set up on Fanelli's tomb of Francis, Lord Cottington, in St. Paul's Chapel in Westminster Abbey; but Vertue speaks of certain other works by the master, which have, however, disappeared. Of these was a bronze bust of James I., larger than life, which was copied from a portrait of the monarch, and placed over the chief entrance to the Banqueting House at Whitehall; a bust of Charles I. in brass, with a helmet surmounted by a dragon, the whole three feet high and mounted on a pedestal of black marble, which Walpole thought he had identified in a similar bust then in the collection of Mr. Hoare, at Stourhead; and the figure of Sir George Villiers, afterwards Duke of Buckingham; while the monument to James River

in St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield, can only conjecturally be attributed to Le Sœur. The sculptor is also known to have executed a fountain surrounded by several figures, once at Somerset House, as well as six statues in brass as adornments to the gardens of St. James's Palace. Concerning these figures, Peacham, in his "Compleat Gentleman," makes the following reference:

"In the garden at St. James's, there are also half a dozen brasse statues, rare ones, cast by Hubert Le Sueur, his Majesties Servant, now dwelling in St. Bartholomew's, London; the most industrious and excellent statuary in all materials that ever this country enjoyed. The best of them is the Gladiator,* molded from that in Cardinal Borghese's villa, by the procurement and industry of ingenious Master Gage. And at this present the said Master Sueur hath divers other admirable molds to caste in brasse for his Majesty; and among the rest, that famous Diana of Ephesus, before named. But the great horse with his majesty upon it, twice as great as life, and now well nigh finished, will compare with that of the new Bridge at Paris, or those others at Florence, and Madrid, though made by Sueur his master, John de Bolonia, that rare workman, who not long since lived at Florence."

The two following documents, incidentally reveal certain other works by Le Sœur, to which I have not already referred. The first is dated June 17, 1638, and reads as follows:

"I, Hubert Le Sueur sculptor have bargained with the King's Matie of Great Britaine to cast in brasse two statues of five footes and 8 inches high. One that representeth our late Souveraine Lord King James and the other our Souveraine Lord Kinge Charles for the summe of 340^{Li} of good and lawfull money of England to be paid in this manner viz^{t} 170^{Li} before hand and the other 170^{Li} when the work shall be finished

* "The Gladiator" used to stand at the east end of the ornamental water in St. James's Park, where it may be seen in old prints; it was subsequently removed to Hampton Court.

and delivered to the surveyor of his Ma^ties works in March ensuinge, and the said Hubert Le Sueur is to receive the aforesaid summes w^thout paying any Fees for the Receipt thereof.

"HUBER LE SUEUR.

"I was present and wittness to the bargain.

"INIGO JONES."

The other document is as follows:

"Your Royall Ma^tie is most humbly besought gratiously to give orders for the payment of one hundred pounds for a mercury delivered for her Ma^ties Fountain.

"30^Li item for yo^r Ma^ties Pourtraite w^th the Imperiall Crowne, wholly gilt (which price if it should be rejected or neglected would turn to your poor pet^rs great confusion) what your Ma^tie shall please.

"Item for Three Patternes two of Venus and one of Bacchus (alle of Waxe) each for 3^Li faiet 9^Li.

"All which pieces have been delivered by

"Your Ma^ties most humble obedient and unworthy Praxiteles

"LE SUEUR."

The "Pourtraite" mentioned above is evidently a bust; while the "Patternes" are, of course, models, such as that for the equestrian statue at Charing Cross, which is recorded in Vanderdort's catalogue of King Charles's art treasures as "a model, in small." *

Like Single-Speech Hamilton, however, Le Sœur, as far as this country is concerned, will live by his one superb achievement which stands, in the sight of all men, on the spot where, as Dr. Johnson once said, you can see "the full tide of humanity sweep by" in never-ending flood.

One little item of knowledge concerning Le Sœur's private life exists in the fact that he lived in Bartholomew

* Walpole was informed that the statue of the Duchy of Lennox, existing in his day, was by Le Sœur, but he was never quite satisfactorily persuaded of the truth of this assertion.

Close, and that he had a son, Isaac, who was buried in the church of St. Bartholomew the Great, on November 29, 1630, just twenty years before he himself died.

Besides Le Sœur, at least two other foreign sculptors were working in this country, about this period, but, although they are said to have produced certain sepulchral monuments here, these have never been identified. The first of these men was *Francis Anguier*, and what little we know of him is gleaned from D'Argenville's "Vie des Fameux Sculpteurs." Thus we learn that he was born at Eu, in Normandy, in 1604, and came to this country early in his career. It would appear that his success here was in no sense equivocal, for he gained sufficient money to enable him to travel in Italy. Subsequently he returned to his native land and there enhanced his reputation, producing various large and important monuments, notably those to the De Thon family, to Henri de Condé, Bignon, and the Longueville family * in Paris. His death took place in 1699. The other French sculptor who sojourned in England for a time was *Ambrose Du Val*, who was born at Mans, although the date of this event has not, I believe, been preserved. Coming, like Augnier, at an early age to this country, he seems to have been widely patronised; and it is likely that many of the fine tombs extant in England, to which no name can be with certainty allocated, may have emanated from him. He afterwards returned to France at the desire of Colbert, who was at this time engaged in adorning Paris and other centres with monumental works of art and records of the prowess of his royal master, Louis XIV. Among other things which Du Val executed, was the monument of Henri de Bourbon-Condé, which had been designed by Perrault, and was set up in 1663.* There appears to be no record of the date of Du Val's death, or indeed of anything further regarding him or his work.

Whether such men as *Enoch Wyat*, who is known to have carved two figures on the water-gate of Somerset House, and a statue of Jupiter, and who, to quote

* Le Noir, "Monumens Français."

Walpole, "altered and covered the King's statues, which during the Civil troubles were thrust into Whitehall Gardens, and which, it seems, were too heathenishly naked to be exposed to the inflammeable eyes of that devout generation"; or *Zachary Taylor*, surveyor and carver to the king, and who produced some subsidiary work both at Somerset House and Wilton; or *Captain Bowden*, of the trained bands, who also did some carving at Wilton; or *John Osborn*, whose only known production was a head of Frederic Henry, Prince of Orange, executed in relief on tortoiseshell, in 1626, can be properly regarded as coming under the head of sculptors, is a question. Rather, I think, are they to be regarded as journeymen carvers who produced work based on designs either given them by their patrons, who probably picked them up on their travels in France or Italy, or who, if they ventured into originality, never succeeded in making a mark or in executing work that can differentiate them very much from numbers of other statuaries whose names are lost in oblivion.

Fanelli, who was working in this country at this time, as well as Edward Pierce, the younger, may, however, be better regarded in the light of successful and by no means contemptible sculptors. *Francis Fanelli* was one of the numerous band of artists who made a home and a living in this country, during the seventeenth century, attracted hither by the patronage of Charles I. and his court. He was a Florentine, and principally occupied himself in metal work. Vanderdort, who calls him "the one-eyed Italian," tells us that there was a small figure of Cupid seated on a running horse, executed by Fanelli, in the king's collection; while better known are the statues of Charles and Henrietta Maria, in niches in the quadrangle of St. John's College, Oxford, which were also designed and cast by him.*

As these figures were the gift of Laud to his old college, that famous Churchman is to be numbered among Fanelli's patrons. Another of these was William, Duke

* It is probable that they would not have escaped destruction during the Civil War had they not been buried at that time.

of Newcastle, who commissioned or otherwise purchased several of the sculptor's works, among them being a head in brass of Charles, Prince of Wales (afterwards Charles II.), dated 1640, and signed "Fra. Fanellius, Florentinus, sculptor. magn. Brit. regis." Walpole records also "several figures in small brass," as being the sculptor's work, belonging to the Duke of Newcastle; notably a St. George and the Dragon dead; another depicting the combat; two horses grazing; four others in different attitudes; a Cupid and a Turk, both on horseback; and a Centaur with a woman; while he also attributes to him or Le Sœur a bronze head of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and two of Lady Venetia Digby, the wife of Sir Kenelm Digby. One of these is notable for the excellence with which a lace handkerchief is rendered, and because of the Latin line which was written behind it:

Uxorem vivam amare voluptas, defunctam religio.

It is known that Sir Kenelm erected a black marble monument to his wife in Christ Church, Newgate Street, and that this memorial was destroyed in the Great Fire, and it has been surmised that one of these busts formerly decorated the tomb and was saved from the disaster. In Walpole's day there were two copper busts of Lady Venetia "at Mr. Wright's at Gothurst in Buckinghamshire," and these may possibly have been replicas of those referred to.

In addition to these, a few other busts have been, with all probability, traced to Fanelli; of these are the monument to Lord Cottington, in the Abbey; the monumental bust of Sir Robert Ayton, in the Abbey; another of Sir Robert Stapylton; one of Penelope Noel, in white marble, erected in 1633, at Campden, in Gloucestershire; and two of Charles I., one of which, in the Bodleian, represents the king in armour, with lions' heads on the shoulders, falling collar, and sash (Dallaway); while the full-length effigies of Abraham Blackleech and his wife, in Gloucester Cathedral, and that of Mrs. Delves, at Horsham, are also by Fanelli.

The latter, a most beautiful and wholly unmutilated piece of sculpture, is probably the most perfect thing of its kind ever produced at this period.

No record appears of any other work by Fanelli,* but he is known to have published two books of designs for fountains, vases, and even more ambitious erections. One of these was published, in Paris, by Van Merle, in 1661, the illustrations to it being thought by Vertue to be the work of the great Faithorne. Nothing more is known of Fanelli, for neither the place of his death nor its date seems to have been preserved; but it is interesting to know that he had at least one pupil, an Englishman named John Bank, who was living at the beginning of the eighteenth century, although he never made any name for himself.

Dallaway, summing up the little that is known of this sculptor, and comparing his work with that of Le Sœur, says that it exhibits a higher degree of finish, but less boldness of design than that of the greater man, and he adds: "Fanelli had a more delicate chisel in marking out the lace and drapery of Vandyck's portraits, which were his models; the design being merely that of a portrait in marble; and, as substituting form for colour, partakes in every instance more of Gothic stiffness than of classical life and ease. His busts, indeed, have a Roman air, acquired probably in the school of Bernini, or others of his countrymen."

The *Edward Pierce*, or *Pearce*, whom I have mentioned before, was the son of Edward Pierce, a painter of some merit in the reign of Charles I., who died in 1698. The younger Pierce had therefore an artistic environment from the first, and showing a special aptitude for sculpture, was placed as a pupil, with Francis Bird,† the sculptor who, in the reign of Anne, became the chief

* It seems probable, in view of his known work for Sir Kenelm Digby, that Fanelli executed the interesting tomb in Chilham Church, close to Chilham Castle, Digby's country seat, erected by Sir Anthony Palmer to his wife, Margaret, a sister of Sir Kenelm, who died at Putney in 1619.

† Not Edward Bird, as stated in the "Dictionary of National Biography," who was a painter and whose dates are 1772–1819.

exponent of this branch of art. Like so many sculptors and statuaries at this time, before professions were delineated with the precision they are now, Pierce was also an architect, and one of sufficient standing to become an assistant of Wren. In this capacity he rebuilt the church of St. Clement Danes in 1680, after the design of his illustrious master; for which undertaking the original contract is still in existence;* and he is known to have helped Sir Christopher in the carrying out of many others of his works, and, perhaps, here and there with a suggestion. Among his achievements in sculpture, pure and simple, were the statues of Edward III. and Sir Thomas Gresham, which he carved for the adornment of the Royal Exchange, and that of Sir William Walworth, which was erected in Fishmongers' Hall. He also produced a bust of Thomas Evans, Master of the Painters' Company, in 1687, for the hall of that guild; of Wren and Newton for the Bodleian Library, at Oxford; and a head of the poet Milton. But perhaps his best known and most successful bust was that of Oliver Cromwell. It is not stated for whom he executed this fine head; but there is a record that it was sold by auction in 1714, and it is now in a private collection, a terra-cotta replica of it being in the National Portrait Gallery. Among other work which has been traced to Pierce are the four dragons on the Monument, for which he was paid the handsome sum of £50 each. It seems highly probable that Pierce also executed the bas-relief at the base of the column, although in the accounts for the work (which show that the whole thing cost £8000) this portion of it is not specifically mentioned. Another work which Pierce produced was a fine marble vase at Hampton Court; and in another direction the splendid monument to Sir William Maynard, in Little Easton Church, Essex, his largest and, in some respects, his most notable achievement.

This important example of the monumental sculpture of this period was erected to the memory of Sir William,

* In the British Museum, Additional MSS. Chart 1605. In this, by-the-bye, the name is spelt Pearce.

first Baron Maynard, and his second wife, Anne, daughter of Sir Antony Everard, on the west wall of the Maynard Chapel. It consists of a pedestal swelling out in the centre, upon which is the inscription. On the centre of the pedestal is a large vase. The figure of Lord Maynard, dressed as an ancient Roman commander, is placed on the dexter side of the monument, and on the sinister side, the figure of Lady Maynard, garbed as an ancient Roman matron. The wall behind these figures and vase is lined with slabs of marble, and the whole surmounted by a broken pediment with a shield in the centre, from which hang two wreaths of flowers. The whole is executed in veined marble, except the figures, which are in statuary marble.

The curious inscription, translated, runs as follows:

"Sacred to the memory of the Right Honorable William Lord Maynard, Baron of Estaines in the County of Essex and of Wicklow in Ireland, who for many years executed the office of Lord Lieutenant of the Counties of Essex and Cambridge under King Charles the First, with the great approbation both of the king and people and with a conscience beyond the blame of either.

"In every respect indeed he was a man well calculated to supply the place of a Prince, the Defender of the Peace, the laws, and the Anglo-Catholic Faith. But when the madness of fanatics daily increased, when even religion itself was banished, then he bid adieu to a restless, rebellious, and ungrateful country, which was so unworthy of such a pattern of true christian love, both towards God and his neighbour, that he at length happily changed it for a better, namely a heavenly, on the 18th Dec., 1640, in the 55th year of his age.

"Near him lies Anne, his right honourable wife, descended from the ancient family of the Everards of Langleys, in this County of Essex; who, after she had seen an only son and five excellent daughters adorned with their parents' virtues, which they so excelled in as to excite the envy of mankind, followed her husband

to heaven, there to enjoy again his amiable and most happy company among the saints, on the 5th of August, in the year of our Lord 1647."

Edward Pierce lived in a house at the corner of Surrey Street, Strand, and here he died in 1698, being buried in the Savoy Chapel near by.

CAIUS GABRIEL CIBBER

CHAPTER IV

CIBBER AND GRINLING GIBBON

Caius Gabriel Cibber may be regarded, in some respects, as the first of those sculptors, domiciled in England, who wrought in this branch of art in the way we understand sculpture to-day; that is, as a carver of figures rather than as one who adorned buildings with sculptured friezes and arabesques; in a word, as an artist without the additional labour of an artisan; for although in his earlier days he not improbably united, as was then the fashion, the functions of the sculptor, architect, and mason, when he came to his own he almost entirely restricted himself to the production of statues and busts, and thus, it may be said, pioneered in this country the way for the fine succession of sculptors which followed him.

We are accustomed nowadays to associate the name of Cibber with the actor-dramatist and wit of Georgian days—the author of "The Careless Husband" and "The Apology for His Own Life"—the Colley Cibber whose name is almost as well known as are those of Garrick and Kean. Colley Cibber was, indeed, the son of Caius Gabriel, and in his "Apology" might have been expected to throw some light on his parentage, and incidentally on his father's career. But, unfortunately, we find nothing whatever, and our rather scanty information about the elder man's early years is restricted to the fact that he was the son of a cabinet-maker living at Flensburg, in Holstein, in which town Caius Gabriel was born in 1630. No records of his early years are in existence, or at any rate none have been discovered, and the first indication we have of the direction in which his talent showed itself, is the fact that having exhibited

a marked ability for carving, which somehow attracted the attention of the King of Denmark, that monarch sent him, at his own charge, to study in Rome—the Mecca then, as now, of the art student. How long he remained in the Eternal City, or under whom he studied (although it is not improbable that he came under the influence of the great Bernini) is unknown. At the expiration of his sojourn in Italy, however, he came to England, probably actuated in this step by the growing patronage of the fine arts in this country, and perhaps induced to do so by such English friends as he may have made in Rome. As, indeed, we learn that, on his arrival here, he found employment with the Stones, it seems probable that the brothers came across him during their travels in Italy and persuaded him to try his fortune in their native land. How long he remained with the Stones is uncertain, but we know that he achieved the position of foreman to them, and that when John was seized with palsy during his stay at Breda,* he was sent out to bring him home. John died in 1667, and that date therefore possibly marks the period when Cibber set up for himself. That he had already become favourably known to the art patrons of this country, is proved by the fact that, on the death of John Stone, he was able to remove to a large house in Southampton Street, and was soon as fully occupied with commissions as he wished to be; his chief patron being the first Duke of Devonshire.

This was the period when a love of classical deities induced the owners of great country mansions to fill their grounds with heathen gods and goddesses. To this phase of work Cibber seems to have first turned his attention, and, as Cunningham says, "he performed for the vista and the grove what Thornhill and Laguerre did for the ceilings and the walls." The mythology was ransacked for appropriate adornments to the gardens of great nobles, and the spacious grounds of Chatsworth, which Talman was erecting for the Duke, afforded a splendid dumping-ground for Cibber's excursions into

* *See ante*, p. 43.

classical sculpture. The combination of rocks and groves, the river flowing through the estate, the forest of verdure rising above the splendid mansion, all helped to give appropriateness to the spot as a setting for temples and statues; and Cibber, with an open-handed and opulent patron at his back, was able to give full scope to his imagination, and to people with stone images and classic buildings the natural resting-places which he found made to his hand.

Cunningham tells us something of what the sculptor did to improve, as was then supposed, the beauties of nature. "He built a little temple, half seen, half hid in the grove, introduced a fountain, which, on touching a spring, spouted an inundation from column and floor, that, uniting into one stream, went rolling over an enormous flight of steps, and flowed within a quoit-cast of the mansion, when it sank and disappeared in a concealed channel. Among these groves and temples and fountains were scattered plentifully the deities and demi-deities of Cibber, all cut in free-stone, a material in which he delighted, as it yielded readily to the chisel, and enabled him to keep pace with the impatience of his customers. Much of this is mutilated now or destroyed; but the whole was once reckoned beautiful, and over the mystery of its fountains, and the classic elegance of its groves and goddesses, both learned and noble have

Wondered with a foolish face of praise."

It would appear that Cibber was employed at Chatsworth from 1688 till 1690, and that he had received down to the December of the latter year a sum of £310 for work done; not a very extravagant remuneration it must be confessed. Some details of particular payments are to be found in a volume of the artist's receipts now at Hardwicke Hall. Thus we read that "For two figures in the pediment (of Chatsworth), each of them four tons of stone, £140 for both"; "For two dogs, £8 each"; "For twelve Cæsars' heads, £5 a piece"; to which is added: "My Lord Kingston did after this

pay for board and wine for me and my man." "For two statues as big as life I had £35 a piece, and all charges borne"; and he adds: "At this rate I shall endeavour to serve a nobleman in free-stone."

Cunningham, commenting on the lowness of the prices named, remarks that the sculptor appears, however, even more than satisfied, and adds: "It is probable that the figures were wrought without models. To make an exact copy of a statue was in those days rendered laborious from the inferiority of the instruments by which the model was imitated in stone or marble."

It is impossible to say, now, what was the extent of Cibber's work in the direction of classical adornments to the houses and gardens of this period. The taste for such things was beginning to take a firm hold and was very widely spread, and the sculptor, whose novitiate had been passed, as we have seen, in Rome, seems to have partly led and partly followed the prevailing fashion—a fashion which, if it did not afford him very large opportunities for exhibiting originality, at least helped to fill his pockets in a way sufficient, apparently, for his satisfaction.

I cannot but think that he must have enjoyed a very extensive practice in such things alone, for the prices he received (from the Duke of Devonshire, for instance) were anything but princely, and he must have required a great number of such commissions to have enabled him to keep a large house in London, as well as to marry twice, as we know he did. His first wife died young, and Cibber had, apparently, no children by her, but as he married again, a lady of the ancient family of Colley, in Rutlandshire, and with her had a dowry of £6000, his income from this source may at that time have sufficed to make him largely independent, though hardly to such an extent as to enable him to dispense with as much as he could gain from his art. It is interesting to know that by this alliance his children became kinsmen of William of Wykeham, and according to the provisions of the founder's will (which had force till they were ruthlessly abrogated at the instance of Mr.

Gladstone) one of Cibber's sons was admitted to the foundation, on which occasion his father executed and presented to Winchester the statue of Wykeham, which now stands over the doorway of the large schoolroom. I may here state that this son became subsequently a Fellow of New College, Oxford, and that his better-known brother, Colley, was born in 1671.

If our knowledge of Cibber's personal life is of the scantiest, we are at least able to identify much of his work, and this is here more to our purpose. By common consent the most important of his carvings are the two figures, representing "Melancholy and Madness," which he executed for the entrance to Bethlehem Hospital. I say by common consent, because they have always appealed to the public, and, after all, this is no bad test of an artist's success. On the other hand, there has been no lack of detractors, from Pope, whose lines will be familiar to many :

> Where o'er the gates, by his famed father's hand,
> Great Cibber's brazen brainless brothers stand,

to Flaxman, who once dismissed them, in one of his Lectures, simply as "the mad figures on the piers of Bedlam gates," which is the kind of negative criticism of which the inference is not difficult to perceive. Those, too, who are for ever seeking an earlier inspiration for any work of art will be pleased to find Dallaway remarking that "The Dying Gladiator" "suggested the design of those two figures of maniacs as far as attitude—or perhaps the Slaves of Michael Angelo, or the Torso and Hercules Farnese, for a general idea of muscular expression. The position of the figures is evidently borrowed from that of the Duke Giuliano de' Medici at Florence, by Michael Angelo, personifying Day and Night."

This accusation of plagiarism is such an easy one to make—indeed it has been brought against most men who have been notable in all sorts of ways—that it need not concern us any more than it concerned Molière, whose "Je reprends mon bien où je le trouve" has

become famous. The fact is that it requires an originally artistic mind to know *what* to copy, and as Cunningham has very pertinently remarked, Cibber needed but to take one of the unhappy inmates of the asylum as a model without imitating what Michael Angelo had already produced. The important point is that these two figures initiated that natural spirit in sculpture which was, before their day, almost wholly absent from such plastic work as was produced in this country. They strike the beholder with a sort of fascination; looking at them the horror and the pathos of madness (in earlier days never properly realised; *e.g.*, the delight, in the sixteenth century, for instance, at the sight of "simples" and "idiots," as shown in Shakespeare) are brought home to the beholder in a quite forcible manner. Cunningham gives us a proof of this, in a personal experience. "I remember," says he, "when an utter stranger in London, I found myself in the presence of those statues, then occupying the entrance to Moorfields. Sculpture was to me at that time an art unknown, and it had to force its excellence upon my mind, without the advantage of any preparation either through drawings or descriptions. But I perceived the meaning of those statues at once, felt the pathetic truth of the delineation, and congratulated myself on having discovered a new source of enjoyment. The impression which they made upon me induced me to expect too much from the rest of our sculpture. In St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey, I found much finer work, but less fervour of poetic sentiment, than what Cibber had stamped upon those rough stones, which he is said to have cut at once from the block without the aid of models." *

To which I may add the fact that the great Roubiliac so greatly admired these figures that he never visited London without making a special journey to Moorfields to look at and study those masterpieces of his great predecessor. The figures were carved in Portland stone, which was afterwards covered with a composition

* This fact is stated by J. T. Smith in his "Nollekens and his Times."

of white lead! Having become somewhat affected by exposure to the air, they were submitted to the younger Bacon, who restored their surfaces at the time when the new Bethlehem Hospital was erected in St. George's Fields, in 1812,* after which they were placed in the Hall of the new buildings. They are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Perhaps Cibber's next best production was the fountain which formerly stood in the middle of the garden of Soho Square. In the centre of this fountain rose a stone statue of Charles II. in armour, on a pedestal enriched with crowns and foliage. The elaborate base consisted of four emblematical figures representing the Thames, the Severn, the Tyne, and the Humber; the whole work exhibiting great freedom and originality of conception, and substantiating Cibber's claim to be considered the forerunner in this country of poetic sculpture. Another example of Cibber's work was one of the elaborate vases in the gardens of Hampton Court. A companion vase was carved by a Frenchman, Valadier, and Cibber is said to have undertaken his work in competition with the foreigner. It seems more likely, however, that both sculptors were in the pay of the Government (we certainly know Cibber to have been so), and that to each was allocated one of these commissions. It has never been satisfactorily ascertained which of the vases was the work of our sculptor, although there have not been wanting experts who have endeavoured to clear up the point.

Like so many other sculptors of the seventeenth century, Cibber was employed in decorating the Royal Exchange with figures, and, according to Walpole, "he carved most of the statues of kings, as far as King Charles"; while that of Sir Thomas Gresham, placed in the piazza beneath, was also from his hand. They cannot, however, be regarded as important contributions to his achievement, for they were in the nature of official commissions, and were, no doubt, executed rather as

* There is a tradition that one of the statues was modelled from Oliver Cromwell's giant porter, then an inmate of the hospital.

adjuncts to the building in which they were placed, than as works of art *per se*.

It is known that, at a later date, Cibber came under the notice of Sir Christopher Wren, and it was due to this circumstance that he was employed not only to carve the bas-relief on the west side of the base of the monument,* but also to execute the more ambitious Phœnix above the south door of St. Paul's Cathedral; receiving for the latter work, which is in bold relief, 18 ft. long and 9 ft. wide, the sum of £100.

Cibber enjoyed royal patronage, and received the appointment of Carver to the King, and much of his time was probably employed in helping to decorate the royal palaces and in other cognate work, which may account for the relatively few examples of his skill known to have been executed.

It seems probable, however, that he must have produced a considerable number of those sepulchral monuments, dating from this period, which are found in abundance in the churches throughout the country. One of these can certainly be traced to him in the ambitious monument in the Sackville Chapel in Buckhurst Church. The contract for this is dated 1677, and the price paid was £350.† This tomb stands near the centre of the chapel, and is of an altar shape. It was erected in memory of Thomas Sackville, youngest son of Richard, fifth Earl of Dorset, and Frances Cranfield, his wife. A reclining effigy of Thomas Sackville surmounts the memorial, on the sides of which are the figures of the father and mother on the one hand, and of their six sons and six daughters on the other.

Although the tomb was chiefly commemorative of Thomas Sackville, the memory of other members of the family who had predeceased him, or who died subsequently, is also perpetuated. Thus one of the

* In the Domestic State Papers are recorded payments to Cibber for carving "hieroglyphic figures on the monument," under date of November 27, 1674.

† "Short History of Withyam and Buckhurst," by the Rev. C. N. Sutton, rector, 1893.

bas-reliefs represents, as an infant, holding a skull and a palm branch, the Hon. Lionel Sackville, who died in 1646; another, also a Lionel, whose death, at the age of two years and six months, occurred in 1659; still another, Cranfield, who died in 1660; while the Hon. Edward Sackville, who must have departed this life while the tomb was in progress (he died in 1678, aged thirty-seven), and Charles, sixth Earl of Dorset, are also commemorated in bold relief.

On the south side are the effigies of six daughters, three of whom died before the tomb was commenced; while on the east side is the following inscription: "This monument was designed to be erected before the decease of ye Rt. Hon. Richard, Earl of Dorset, Father of the youth, who departed this life ye 27: Aug. in the year of our God 1677, and in ye 55th year of his age, and ye Rt. Hon. Frances, Countess Dowager of Dorset, Relict of ye said Father, and Mother of the said youth, erected the same to perpetuate ye memory of Her Husband and Son, in the year of our Lord, 1678."

Nothing further is forthcoming concerning Cibber's life or his works, except that he is said to have built the Danish Church, in Wellclose Square, where his second wife was buried in 1696, the year in which it was completed, and where he himself was laid to rest four years later. Monuments to both were erected in the building.

It would seem that two portraits were painted of Cibber; one by Marcellus Laroon, showing him holding a medal, was in the possession of his son, Colley; another, a miniature in water-colours, depicting him with a pair of compasses in his hand, was executed by Christian Richter, probably copied, with variations, from Laroon's picture, and once belonged to Horace Walpole.*

Although Caius Gabriel Cibber made a name for himself and laboured, not unsuccessfully, to free the art of sculpture from the convention which had characterised it, in this country, during his early days, he can hardly be said to have exercised any very dominating influence

* It was sold at the Strawberry Hill sale for thirty shillings.

or to have founded any school ; * indeed, no pupil of his —and he must have at least had assistants, although their names are not forthcoming—is known ; and the original genius whose personality, in this direction of art, has made illustrious the reign of Charles II., Grinling Gibbon, cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be connected with the methods of his contemporary. Nor can the unimportant men who carried on the art (perhaps the word business would in this case be more appropriate) be linked in any very direct way with Cibber, except in so far as they happened to work during his lifetime and in his adopted country. Five names are, indeed, given by Walpole, but the information which he and the industrious Vertue were able to glean about them is of the scantiest, and would be insufficient to detain us, were it not that by setting it down, one is able to clear the ground before dealing with the great name of Grinling Gibbon.

Thomas Burman is the first of the quintette to be mentioned, and his importance, if it can be termed importance, is solely a reflected one, for he was the master of Bushnell, to whom we shall come later on. We do happen to know one piece of work on which he was employed, the tomb to Mr. and Mrs. Beale at Walton-on-Thames, because an entry in their son Charles Beale's (the portrait painter) diary records the payment to the sculptor thus : " 18 May, 1672. Pd. Mr. Thos. Burman in part, due for my honoured father and mother's monument set up for them at Walton in Bucks, at the expence of my brother Henry Beale and myself, the whole cost paid in full £45 " ; while the bust of Bishop Duppa, in Westminster Abbey, is signed by him.

Burman lived in London, and was buried in the churchyard of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, where his epitaph tells us all the rest we are ever now likely to know of him. Thus it runs : " Here lyes interred Thomas Burman, sculptor, of the parish of St. Martin's in the Fields, who departed this life March 17, 1673–4, aged 56 years."

* The Abbé Le Blanc criticises him adversely in his " Letters on the English and French Nations," 1747.

One *Bowden*, whom I have already incidentally referred to as having been a captain of the trained bands, seems to have executed what little work he ever did, at Wilton, where he was employed together with another obscure sculptor named *Latham*. The latter, however, is at least recorded as doing work outside this local *milieu*, for, in conjunction with one *Boune*, he executed the monument in white marble, to Archbishop Sheldon who died in 1667, in Croydon Church. Dallaway speaks of this work as being finished "with great truth to nature and character," and mentions that the bas-reliefs on the sides depicted a charnel-house. There is an engraving of it in Lyson's "Environs," taken from a drawing made by Sir Thomas Lawrence. The Archbishop is represented lying at full length, leaning on his left hand, while with his right he grasps the episcopal staff. The work is said to be "by Latham, the City architect, and Boune." * The head, crowned with a mitre, is reported to have been finished by an Italian artist.

Another work with which Latham's name is associated was the head fixed to the statue of John Sobieski, brought unfinished to this country by Sir Robert Vyner, and placed in the Stocks Market. This head was that of Charles II., which, considering that the figure was represented trampling on a Turk, was a curiously infelicitous addition!

A portrait of Latham, who is shown leaning on a bust, was painted by Isaac Fuller, who also drew the head of Pierce, the sculptor, once in the possession of Horace Walpole.†

William Emmett is only known as the predecessor of Grinling Gibbon, in the office of Sculptor to the Crown, in which position he had succeeded his uncle, one Philip. Art had sunk so low at this period that such an appointment by no means necessarily indicated particular talent, and like, on occasion, the fillers of the post of Poet Laureate, such royal servants had little to recommend them except some mysterious influence which would

* Walpole's "Anecdotes of Painting."

† It was sold at the Strawberry Hill sale to J. Dent for three guineas.

have been more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Unlike Latham, who did get some one else to perpetuate his features, Emmett had not even this claim to remembrance, and so he executed, Walpole tells us, a poor mezzotint of himself!

The last of these very feeble artisans was a foreigner—*Francis Du Sart*, who would probably have been long since forgotten, had not De Bie in his "Golden Cabinet," mentioned the fact that he was employed by "the king of England" to adorn his palace with works in marble and models in clay, and that he died in London in 1661.* Walpole questions whether this king was Charles I. or Charles II., but it seems more than likely that it was the former, for even had Charles II. been anxious to adorn anything but his mistresses, it is not probable that Du Sart could have produced much in the short time between the Restoration and the year in which he is said to have died.

The next really great sculptor we come to is *Grinling Gibbon*,† who, as Walpole says, "gave to wood the loose and airy lightness of flowers, and chained together the various productions of the elements, with a free disorder natural to each species." At one time there was much divergence of opinion concerning his nationality and parentage, Murray the painter having told Vertue that he was born in Holland of English parents, while Stoakes assured the same authority that he was the son of a Dutchman domiciled in London, and that he was in fact born in Spur Alley, in the Strand. It has now, however, been conclusively proved that Gibbon was born in Rotterdam on April 4, 1648, and, having regard to his very English name, there seems little doubt that his father was a Briton,‡ even if his mother, which is not

* "Anecdotes of Painting."

† The sculptor invariably wrote his name Gibbon, and as such it should be spelt, although "Gibbons" is more frequently used now. Indeed in the registers of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, the two names are thus variously spelt: Grimlin, Grinling, Grinlim; and Gibbon, Gibon, Gibons, and Gybbon, but never Gibbons.

‡ It has been thought that Simon Gibbon, a carpenter who worked for Inigo Jones, may have been his father, but this has not been proved.

GRINLING GIBBON

unlikely—as Grinling seems to be a Dutch name and may indeed have been the surname of her family—was a native of Holland.*

It appears probable, although there is no certain record of the fact, that young Gibbon came over to this country during the year after the Great Fire, when he was just nineteen, a period when the sudden chance of employment on rebuilding and decoration gave an impetus to that immigration of foreign artists which then took place. We know nothing of Gibbon's training in the art of carving; indeed, he seems to have been one of those natural geniuses who can dispense with the usual curriculum, for when he arrived in this country and took lodgings in Bell Sauvage Court, Ludgate Hill, he executed a pot of flowers with such dexterity and skill that, it is said, the leaves shook as coaches passed by the house, by which I think it probable that the sculptor produced the work and placed it on a window-sill as a sign, and specimen of his powers. If this be so, it is pleasant to think that the handsome actor, Betterton, passing by, may have been attracted by it, for we are told that one of the earliest of Gibbon's employments was the carving of certain of the decorations (cornices and capitals of pillars, &c.) in the theatre in Dorset Square, which Betterton was at this time erecting.†

How long Gibbon stayed in Ludgate Hill is uncertain, and it was while living subsequently at Deptford that he first attracted the attention of John Evelyn, in the year 1670, as the latter was one day walking "near a poor solitary thatched house, in a field in our parish, near Say's Court." The diarist's record of the circumstance is dated January 18, 1671, the day on which he first introduced his *protégé* to the king. "I found him," proceeds Evelyn, "shut in, but looking in at the window, I perceived him carving that large cartoon of Tintoret,

* *See* Ashmole MSS. at Oxford, Black's Catalogue, Coll. 209, where there is a letter from Gibbon to Ashmole, dated October 12, 1682, enclosing one from his sister giving an account of his birth.

† The theatre was not completed at the time of Davenant's death in 1668, being opened three years later.

a copy of which I had myselfe brought from Venice, where the original painting remains. I asked if I might enter, he opened the door civilly to me, and I saw him about such a work, as for curiositie of handlinge, drawing and studious exactness, I had never before seene in all my travels. I questioned him why he worked in such an obscure and lonesome place: he told me, it was that he might apply himself to his profession, without interruption, and wondered not a little how I had found him out. I asked him if he was unwilling to be made known to some greate man, for that I believed it might turn to his profit: he answered, that he was but as yet a beginner, but would not be sorry to sell off that piece; on demanding his price, he said £100. In good earnest, the very frame was worth the money, there being in nature nothing so tender and delicate as the flowers and festoons about it, and yet the work was very strong; in the piece were more than 100 figures of men, &c. I found he was likewise musical, and very civil, sober and discreete in his discourse. There was only an old woman in his house. So desiring leave to visit him sometimes, I went my way."

So great an impression did the carving on which Evelyn found Gibbon engaged, make on the Diarist, that he does not seem to have rested till he was able to bring the sculptor to the most distinguished notice. The first step towards this was his introduction of Gibbon to Sir Peter Lely, Hugh and Baptist May, the now little remembered architects, and, most important of all, to Sir Christopher (then Mr.) Wren. I imagine that Evelyn wished to have some expert opinion on the work which had so greatly impressed him, before seeking permission to present Gibbon at Court. If this was so, the verdict of the eminent men mentioned was conclusive that Evelyn had found a prodigy of art, and on January 18, 1671, as I have said, the Diarist introduced the sculptor to the king at Whitehall, having previously, as he tells us, acquainted his Majesty about the young artist and his manner of finding him, "and begged that he would give me leave to bring him and his worke to Whitehall, for that I would adventure my reputation with his

Majesty, that he had never seen any thing approach it; and that he would be exceedingly pleased, and employ him. The King said he would himselfe go to see him. This was the first notice he had of Mr. Gibbon."

Charles II., who, whatever his faults, was possessed of admirable tact and good breeding, never indicated it better than when he made known his intention of himself going to see Gibbon instead of ordering him to come to the palace; but, as we know, the sculptor's home was hardly one in which to receive so illustrious a visitor, and it was arranged, Evelyn superintending, that Gibbon should go to Whitehall. A second interview with the king took place on March 1,* so that little time was lost, and is thus recorded by Evelyn: "I caused Mr. Gibbon to bring to Whitehall his excellent piece of carving, where being come I advertis'd his Majestie, who asked me where it was; I told him in Sir Richard Browne's (my father-in-law) chamber, and that if it pleas'd his Majesty to appoint whither it should be brought, being large and tho' of wood heavy, I would take care of it; 'No,' says the King, 'shew me the way, I'll go to Sir Richard's chamber,' which he immediately did, walking along the entries after me; as far as the *ewrie*, till he came up into the roome where I also lay. No sooner was he enter'd and cast his eye on the work but he was astonish'd at the curiositie of it, and having consider'd it a long time and discoursed with Mr. Gibbon, whom I brought to kisse his hand, he commanded it should be immediately carried to the Queene's side to shew her. It was carried up into her bed-chamber, where she and the King looked on and admired it againe; the King being call'd away left us with the Queene, believing she would have bought it, it being a Crucifix; but when his Majesty was gone, a French pedling woman, one Mad. de Bord, who used to bring peticoates and fanns, and baubles, out of France to the Ladys, began to find fault with severall things in the worke, which she understood no more than an asse or a monkey, so as in a kind of indignation, I caused the person who brought it

* E. M. Ward painted a picture of the incident.

to carry it back to the chamber, finding the Queene so much govern'd by an ignorant French woman, and this incomparable artist had his labour onely for his paines, which not a little displeas'd me, and he was faine to send it downe to his cottage againe; he not long after sold it for £80, tho' well worth £100 without the frame, to Sir George Viner." *

The result of Evelyn's introduction of Gibbon to the King, if not very propitious in its early effects, proved eventually of particular assistance, for Charles gave the sculptor a post in the Board of Works, and this, together with Wren's fulfilment of his promise to befriend him, may be said to have effectively started Gibbon on that prosperous and busy career which lay before him. All this was due to Evelyn's indefatigable labour on behalf of his friend, and another entry in his diary still further shows this: "His Majesty's surveyor, Mr. Wren," writes Evelyn, "faithfully promis'd me to employ him, I having also bespoke his Majesty for his worke at Windsor, which my friend Mr. May, the architect there, was going to alter and repaire universally; for on the next day (*i.e.*, the 19th Jany) I had a fair opportunity of talking to his Majesty about it."

That Gibbon was not ungrateful for all Evelyn had done for him, is to some extent proved by the fact that he carved and presented to him his own bust in wood, which the Diarist kept, at one time, in his house in Dover Street.†

Although it is known that Gibbon's art was employed in decorating no inconsiderable part of the rebuilt portions of Windsor Castle, such as mantels, over-doors, &c., the chief thing mentioned in connection with his work here is the marble pedestal in the principal quadrangle, on which stood that statue of Charles II., which the loyalty of Tobias Rustat caused to be erected and

* This piece of carving was later at the Duke of Chandos's place, Canons, at Edgware. According to Walpole, it represented the martyrdom of St. Stephen. At the Canons sale it was bought by Mr. John Gore, and descended to J. Gordon Rebow, of Wyvenhoe Park, Essex.

† Nothing seems to be known of it at Wotton, so I suppose it has been lost or destroyed.

presented to his Majesty. This pedestal was decorated with fruit, fish, and naval trophies, in so rich and novel a way that Walpole says "the man and horse may serve for a sign to draw a passenger's eye to the pedestal." It is interesting to remember that beneath this statue and its base, was concealed that engine for raising water which Sir Samuel Morland of Knightsbridge invented and was allowed to set up here.

In connection with this statue, a licence was granted to Gibbon by Charles II. for the exclusive printing of engravings of it, and the sculptor appears to have even undertaken a print of it himself; while, whether with his concurrence or not I am unable to say, a little-known engraver named Quellin also produced a representation of the statue.

Evelyn thus records going to see the new work at Windsor and this statue in particular:

"24. July. 1680. Went to Windsor to see that stately Court, now neere finish'd. There was erected in the Court the King on horseback, lately cast in copper and set on a rich pedestal of white marble, the work of Mr. Gibbons, at the expence of Toby Rustate, a page of the back stairs, who, by his wonderful frugality had arriv'd to a great estate in money, and did many works of charity, as well as this of gratitude to his Master, which cost him £1000. He is a very simple, but honest and loyal creature."

But if Gibbon merely executed the pedestal of the statue of Charles II., he was responsible not only for this portion, but also for the figure itself, of the famous statue of James II. which, with the exception of Le Sœur's Charles I., may be regarded as the most beautiful thing of its kind in London. This statue, erected in 1687, originally stood in the Privy Garden at Whitehall; and later was hidden away behind the Banqueting House, whence it presently emerged into the publicity of Whitehall by being set in the centre of the green patch of grass next to Gwydyr House. More recently it has been moved to the more appropriate purlieus of the Admiralty (James, as Duke of York, was

Lord High Admiral of England, it will be remembered), and may now be seen at the east end of the Mall. The king appears habited as a Roman, after the fashion of an earlier day, when it was considered inappropriate to depict a man in the dress he habitually wore.*

The agreement for this statue was discovered by Vertue, by which the price paid for it is found to have been £300, half of which sum was handed to Gibbon on the signing of the agreement, £50 at the expiration of three months, and the remainder on the completion and erection of the statue. Receipts for £200 of this are dated August 11, 1687, the paymaster being Tobias Rustat. Indeed as this gentleman, who was keeper of Hampton Court and Yeoman of the Robes to Charles II., had paid for the statues of Charles erected at Windsor and at Chelsea Hospital, so he did for that of James;† an entry in the *Gazette* for 1685 reading, "A free gift to their Majesties K. Charles II. and K. James II. of their statues in brass; the former placed upon a pedestal in the Royal Hospital, at Chelsea, and the other at Whitehall—one thousand pounds."

Like so many of his contemporaries Gibbon had also a finger in the pie at the Royal Exchange, where a statue of Charles II. was from his hand, and he received a patent to sell engravings of the work, as was usual at that time when such things were commissioned. This patent is interesting as it indicates the sculptor's residence at this period, for these prints are said to be on view "at his house in the Piazza, Covent Garden."

Another work which Gibbon executed, about this time, for the king, was a bronze bust, larger than life, for the principal entrance to Whitehall, which was, however, subsequently removed to Windsor.

I have set down such details as are known regarding

* Even Sir Joshua Reynolds found fault with the statue of the Duke of Cumberland in Berkeley Square, because the sculptor had habited it in contemporary garb.

† For a list of Rustat's benefactions, *see* his "Life," and also Peck's "Desiderata Curiosa," vol. ii. p. 50.

the statues or pedestals for statues, busts,* &c., which Gibbon executed, but his true genius hardly lay in this direction, although the effigy of James II. was such a marked success. What, however, distinguished the sculptor, was his marvellous power of representing flowers and fruit and foliage in wood, and it was chiefly on such things that he was employed at Windsor, where his "incomparable carving," as Evelyn calls it, in an entry describing a visit to the Castle on June 28, 1678, adorned far better than did Verrio's "sprawling saints," the reconstructive work of Wren and May; the old State dining-room; the royal library, the queen's audience and presence chambers being richly adorned with the fruits (and flowers) of his imagination. But Gibbon's royal commissions were not confined to work at Windsor; he was also engaged at Whitehall in adding to the internal beauty of the queen's apartments and of the chapel, and Evelyn notes visiting both, the former on January 24, 1687, when he says, "I saw the Queen's new apartment at Whitehall. . . . The carving about the chimney-pieces, by Gibbon, is incomparable"; and the latter on the previous December 29. He had gone to the new chapel, then first opened publicly, to hear the Italian music, and he says: "Nothing can be finer than the magnificent marble work and architecture at the end, where are four statues, representing St. John, St. Peter, St. Paul, and the Church, in white marble, the work of Mr. Gibbon, with all the carving and pillars of exquisite art and greate cost."

It will be realised that a man who had thus secured the royal favour and was engaged on such considerable works for the king, was not likely to be long without private patronage, and, indeed, commissions now began to flow in upon Gibbon in large numbers.

One of the earliest of those who sought his aid in adorning their houses was Mr. Bohun, a friend of

* There is an indifferent monument to Miss Beaufoy by him in Westminster Abbey.

Evelyn,* and we find the Diarist, on August 31, 1678, going "to see a neighbour, one Mr. Bohun, related to my son's late tutor of that name, a rich Spanish merchant, living in a neate place, which he has adorned with many curiosities, especially severall carvings of Mr. Gibbon's"; and again, on July 30, 1682, Evelyn records another visit to the same place, and mentions particularly seeing "an excellent pendule clock inclos'd in the curious flower-work of Mr. Gibbon's, in the middle of the vestibule."

There is little doubt that Evelyn was Gibbon's best friend, and the Diarist, having introduced him to the Court, did his best to further his interests in every way. Evelyn, as a cultivated man and one of undeniable taste, knew when he had found something good, and determined that those who could afford such luxuries as Gibbon's inimitable work, should have, at least, an opportunity of securing specimens of his skill. A letter, dating from this time, indicates that the sculptor relied on his friend to push his fortunes. The original, preserved at Wotton, runs thus, and indirectly indicates that Gibbon's skill in the subtleties of English grammar and spelling was hardly equal to his mastery of the intricacies of carving:

"Honred Sir. I wold beg the faver wen you see Sir Joseff Williams (Williamson) again you wold be pleased to speack to him that hee wold get me to Carve his Ladis sons hous my Lord Kildare for I understand it will (be) verry considerabell or If you have acquantans wich (with) my Lord to speacke to him his sealf and I shall for Ev're be obliaged to you I wold speack to Sir Josef my sealf but i knouw it wold do better from you.

"Sir youre Most umbel.

"Sarvant

"Lond. 23rd March. 1682." "G. Gibbon.†

* In the "Book of Expenses" of George Glanville, Evelyn's brother-in-law, occurs the following entry: "Nov. 17 (1692). Payd Mr. Gibbon in full, for ye marble chimney-piece, £18 10s. 0d." Quoted in Holden's "Adversaria"; and see *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, vol. iv. p. 261.

† A letter from Evelyn to Lord Kildare shows that the Diarist fulfilled the request of Gibbon.

Gibbon's work divides itself into two phases: his wood-carving in private houses, on which his fame chiefly rests, and his labours in the realms of what may be described as pure sculpture and carvings as applied to churches. Taking the latter first, perhaps the most notable thing he achieved, was the splendid tomb erected to the memory of Baptist Noel, Viscount Camden, in Exton Church, Rutlandshire. Its dimensions were 22 ft. high by 14 ft. broad, and the Viscount with his wife, appear on it in full-length figures; while there are bas-reliefs of their children. The fact that so much as £1000 was paid for this, indicates the extent of the work expended on it, and also the popularity which Gibbon had achieved at the time he received this commission. A better-known example of the sculptor's skill is the font in St. James's Church, Piccadilly, on which are represented Adam and Eve, St. John the Baptist, and Philip and the Eunuch. The cover was also apparently by Gibbon, but has long since disappeared (it is represented in Vertue's well-known engraving of the font), having, it is said, been stolen and hung up as a kind of sign at a spirit-shop in the vicinity of the church. Evelyn, paying a visit to the then newly rebuilt church on December 7, 1684, makes no mention of this font, but thus speaks of the beautiful woodwork over the altar which Gibbon also executed: "The altar," says he, "was especially adorned, the white marble inclosure curiously and richly carved, the flowers and garlands about the walls by Mr. Gibbons in wood; a pelican with her young at her breast just over the altar in the carv'd compartment and border."

It may be safely asserted that no other artist has ever, before or since, approached Gibbon in such work as that which he here exhibits. The facility he shows is truly marvellous, fruit and flowers of the most delicate outline, dead game and trophies, lace-work and Cupids' heads, seem to have found in him an equally dexterous imitator in wood. In many places of worship specimens of his skill are to be found, such as the foliage in the choir of St. Paul's (for which he was paid £1333 7*s.* 5*d.*); the

altar-piece in the Chapel of Trinity College, Oxford; the Archbishop's Throne in Canterbury Cathedral, for which Archbishop Tenison paid the very moderate sum of £70; the Last Supper, in *alto-relievo*, in the private chapel at Burghley House; the font in St. Margaret's, Lothbury; the monument to Dorothy, Lady Clarke, in St. Paul's, Hammersmith, for which he received £300;* the altar and pulpit in Fawley Church, Bucks; the altar at St. Paul's, Hammersmith; the pulpit and lectern at St. Bartholomew's, Royal Exchange, which were removed when that church was destroyed, and placed temporarily in a church in the Gray's Inn Road; and decorations in many of the churches which Wren rebuilt after the Great Fire.

But it is in his "domestic" wood-carving, as it may be termed, that Gibbon shows most markedly his peculiar and admirable gifts—gifts that differentiate him from all other sculptors and carvers. The best examples of his skill, in this direction, are to be found in many of the large country seats scattered throughout the land. Perhaps Chatsworth exhibits the most masterly series, for here, under his princely patron, Gibbon was enabled to give a free rein to his invention. Here in the great Ante-chamber can be seen the wonderful overmantel carved with dead game, and in one of the ante-rooms a pennon undistinguishable from a real feather, as well as more appropriate work in the chapel. "All the wood-carving in England," says Cunningham, "fades away before that of Gibbon at Chatsworth. The birds seem to live, the foliage to shoot, and the flowers to expand beneath your eye. The most marvellous work of all is a net of game; you imagine at the first glance that the gamekeeper has hung up his day's sport on the wall and that some of the birds are still in the death-flutter." Vertue tells us that when Gibbon had completed his labours at Chatsworth, he carved, and presented to the Duke, a "point-lace cravat," a woodcock, and a medal with his own

* *See* Faulkner's "Fulham."

head upon it, which are preserved under glass in the gallery.*

I may mention here that not all the actual execution of these works was from the hand of Gibbon; indeed he seems to have received no little assistance, for although he was, no doubt, responsible for all the designs and for the more intricate portions of the carving, a certain Samuel Watson, a native of Derbyshire, did a considerable amount of work under his direction at Chatsworth. A number of memoranda written by Watson have been preserved, by which we learn that, on September 24, 1704, he received no less a sum than £342 odd for work done by him,† in wood, and still larger sums for carvings in wood and stone. So much indeed did he do here that it has been claimed for him that it was he and he only who was responsible for these embellishments at Chatsworth. The absence of Gibbon's name from the auditor's accounts connected with the building of the mansion, and the feeble epitaph on Watson's tomb which begins:

> Watson is gone, whose skilful art displayed
> To the very life whatever nature made:
> View but his wondrous works at Chatsworth Hall,
> Which are so gazed at and admired by all,

have been supposed to afford more or less incontrovertible proof of the assertion; but as Cunningham well says, "Had the real masterpieces of Chatsworth been Watson's, Watson would not have remained in Derbyshire to lead an obscure life, and be buried with a doggerel epitaph." ‡

At a somewhat later period than the Chatsworth embellishments were those which Gibbon undertook at Petworth, the decoration of one of the rooms in which

* Walpole adds to this: "I have another point cravat by him, the art of which arrives even to deception, and Herodias with St. John's head, *alto-relievo* in ivory." This subsequently belonged to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. There was also a specimen at Cullum House, Banffshire.

† *See* Rhodes's "Peak Scenery."

‡ *See* Gilpin, and Lysons's "History of Derbyshire," for the reasons of Watson's claims as against those of Gibbon.

mansion Walpole calls "the most superb monument of his skill"; and well he may, for the panels of the apartment (measuring 60 ft. by 24 ft., and 20 ft. in height) are one mass of profuse decoration exhibiting in extraordinary richness, fruit, flowers, shells, birds and sculptured vases, together with festoons enclosing the spaces in which pictures are introduced.* Here, too, he executed that antique vase with a bas-relief which has been described as "of the purest taste, and worthy the Grecian age of cameos," and which would have been destroyed in a fire which occurred in the mansion, had not one of Gibbon's assistants, Selden, rescued it, losing his life in the act, however.

Another country seat wherein Gibbon's wood-carving may be seen to the greatest advantage, is Burghley House, where, in addition to the altar-piece and other work in the Chapel, already referred to, he was responsible for a number of overmantels (in the Brown Drawing-room and Jewel Closet, for instance), over-doors and picture-frames (in the Black and Yellow Bedchamber, the First George Room, and elsewhere). At Houghton there are also two overmantels from his hand, and at Badminton the wall decorations in the Library are excellent specimens of his skill; while in the following mansions examples, more or less elaborate, are to be seen: Belton House,† near Grantham; Blenheim Palace; Cassiobury Park; Wimpole; Gosford House; Somerleyton, near Lowestoft; Melbury House;† Gatton Park; Studley Royal; Kirtlington Park, Oxfordshire; Lowther Castle; Witley Court; Lyme House, near Disley; Wollaston; Hurstmonceaux Place; Stanstead House, Hants; Sodbury Hall, Derbyshire; and Lee Place, near Charlbury, Oxfordshire; while he also decorated the house of Sir Edward Waldo in Cheapside, with carvings which were subsequently removed to Gungrog, near Welshpool.

* *See* "History of Western Sussex," vol. ii. part i. p. 282.

† The method of preserving Gibbon's carving from worms, &c., invented by W. Gibbs (1792–1875), was applied successfully here as well as at Chatsworth.

Besides these, Gibbon's carving may be seen in the Hall of the Inner Temple; in Heralds' College; in the New River House, Clerkenwell; in the Bristol City Library;* in the Hall of the Skinners' Company, Dowgate Hill; and in Wren's Library at Trinity College, Cambridge; and even so far away as Modena, where some carving by him, in the Ducal Palace, is conjectured to have been sent as a gift by Charles II. Gibbon's work, in this direction, in the King's Gallery at Kensington Palace, is known to most people, and the recent dismantling and sale of Holme Lacy (Lord Chesterfield's seat) has drawn attention to the beautiful specimens which were, till recently, to be seen in the Dining-room and elsewhere there.

It is probable that Gibbon decorated Monmouth House, Soho Square, the carvings in which residence were said, by J. T. Smith, who saw them in company with Nollekens just before the place was pulled down, to resemble those by Gibbon in St. James's, Piccadilly.

Among the other work by Gibbon, recorded by Vertue or Walpole, may be mentioned a chimney-piece adorned with flowers and vases at Stanstead, the seat of the Earl of Halifax, and a carved frame surrounding a portrait of Mary Lepel, Lady Hervey, which was once at Strawberry Hill; while he also made a design for the statues which were intended to decorate the mausoleum to Charles I., which Wren was commissioned to erect, but which never emerged from its initial stages.†

Even this extensive list does not exhaust what Gibbon did in this direction.‡ Few country seats, dating from this period, fail to exhibit something, more or less notable, said to be from his hand; although there is no doubt that much which is attributed to him is only in his style and is really the work of followers who copied his designs, or assistants who worked more or less directly

* *See* "History of Bristol City Library," by Charles Tovey.

† Mrs. Oldfield, the actress, once possessed "The Earl of Strafford, a whole length, finely carved in ivory, by Mr. Gibbon." One wonders where it is now!

‡ Walpole notes that "at Mr. Norton's, at Southwick, in Hampshire, was a whole gallery embroidered in panels by his hand."

under his superintendence. The split pea, which he was fond of introducing among his fruit decorations, is generally regarded as a kind of "signature," proving such carvings in which it appears, to be his, although it seems probable that this may have been occasionally imitated by copyists, and can hardly be regarded as a positive proof of authenticity.

Much, too, of Gibbon's work has undoubtedly been spoilt, like so much other decorative carving, by the layers of paint and varnish with which a later period covered them, and it is only necessary to see examples of his untouched work to realise with what skill (apart from the inherent artistry of design and arrangement) he beautified the wood over which the magic of his tools had passed.

In 1714 Gibbon was appointed Master Carver to George I., receiving a salary of 1*s.* 6*d.* a day—one of those practically honorary offices which rather indicated recognition of talent than any attempt to add to the emoluments of the person thus honoured. This post and its "moderate bounty" were held by Gibbon for the short remainder of his life, a period of only seven years, as he died on August 3, 1721, at his house in Bow Street,* being buried in the churchyard of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, on August 10. In November 1722 an auction was held of his effects, included among which were several examples of his work, notably two chimney-pieces which were valued, respectively, at £100 and £120; and his bust in marble by himself.†

Of Gibbon's pupils and assistants little is known; Selden, as we have seen, risked and lost his life to save an example of his master's skill, but this solitary and rather pathetic circumstance is all that has been preserved concerning him; many better remembered men might be pleased to have come down to posterity, with so meagre but, at the same time, so honourable a record. Watson carried out much of Gibbon's design at Chatsworth,

* He had resided here since 1678. In 1701, this house fell down (*see* the *Postman* for January 24, 1701), but was rebuilt by Gibbon.

† Probably that which Nahum Tate has "celebrated" in verse.

but can hardly be regarded as an original artist; Henry Phillips assisted the master at Whitehall; a certain Dievot or Dyvoet of Brussels and Laurens of Mechlin are known to have done journeyman work for him, notably on the statue of James II. already referred to, and after being in this country for some years, to have returned to their native towns, where they presumably carried on their trade not without success, the former, at least, being recorded as having become rich from its proceeds; the latter dying in easy circumstances at Mechlin, in 1715.

Besides the marble bust which Gibbon executed of himself, Sir Godfrey Kneller painted his portrait, which was once at Houghton and is now at St. Petersburg, and from which J. R. Smith executed a print; it represents the sculptor in a full flowing wig and ample gown, holding with one hand a head of Niobe (probably from some actual carving executed by him) and with the other grasping, in a very affected and unworkmanlike way, a pair of compasses. In another picture of Gibbon, painted by Closterman, and also engraved by Smith, he is represented with his wife, but there is no record extant telling us of the date of his marriage. His wife, however, predeceased him, in December 1719, and was buried, on the 30th of that month, in St. Paul's, Covent Garden. They had nine or ten children, five of whom were daughters, one, Catherine, becoming the wife of Joseph Biscoe, and being buried at Chelsea on January 23, 1732. The baptisms of Gibbon's children are recorded in the register of St. Paul's, where the sculptor's name is variously spelt, as I have before mentioned.

Although there is thus a certain amount of information available about his work and his personal appearance, we know curiously little of the character of Grinling Gibbon. That a man whom so judicious a person as John Evelyn continued to befriend during his life should have been both honest and sober-living, goes almost without saying. That he was grateful to those who assisted him is equally proved. Perhaps the extraordinary

reputation he achieved may have made him a little vain and self-satisfied, as he looks in Kneller's portrait, but that will not detract from the splendour of the legacy, unique of its kind, which he has left to later wondering generations.

STATUE OF QUEEN ANNE
By Bird

CHAPTER V

BUSHNELL, BIRD, RYSBRACK, SCHEEMAKERS, ROUBILIAC, AND OTHERS

Although Grinling Gibbon is chiefly associated with the days of Charles II., he lived, as we have seen, through the reigns of that monarch's three successors and well into that of George I., the result being that his career overlapped those of several other sculptors, who were working in this country at the same time, but who are usually regarded as later men. None of these was of first-rate importance, although the last of them I shall speak of, Francis Bird, has claims to more consideration than the others. As Bird was essentially *the* sculptor of Queen Anne's reign, his career will conveniently round off what I have to say about those who practised the art in England, before we come to the notable men who illustrated it, in so distinguished a way, under the Georges.

The first sculptor to be noticed is *Thomas Benière*, who, although a Frenchman, was born in this country in 1663. He produced a number of small works in marble, which are said to have been "much commended"; but they have not survived, at least with any known mark of their *provénance*, to our day, although Vertue states that the "anatomic figure commonly seen in the shops of apothecaries was taken from his original model." Benière seems to have been rather an industrious workman than an inspired sculptor, probably turning out with facility, and a certain success, those busts which he is known to have executed at two guineas each, a sum which at once indicates his capacity. His short life was passed in the East End, and he both lived and died at a house near the Fleet Ditch, in 1693, having thus only attained his thirtieth year.

Another foreigner who was working in our midst, at this time, was one *Quellin*, about whom so little is known that not even his Christian name has survived. His father, Artus Quellin, is said to have been a successful carver in Antwerp—indeed, the whole family had a bent this way—but when the son settled in this country is not recorded. However, inasmuch as he is known to have resided in a large house in Tower Street, St. Giles's, near the Seven Dials, we may assume that he carried on his art as successfully here as his father did in Flanders. But as a matter of fact we only know of a single work from his hand, namely, the curious and remarkable monument to Thomas Thynne of Longleat —Tom of Ten Thousand—in Westminster Abbey. On the tomb there is a representation of Thynne's murder on February 12, 1682, when he was shot in his coach,* at the bottom of the Haymarket, either by Count Konigsmarck or ruffians in his pay.

Of more importance was *John Bushnell*, to whom reference has before been made in connection with Thomas Burman, whose pupil he was, and who was born in England about the middle of the seventeenth century, although the actual year is not known. He became, as a youth, a pupil of Burman, but owing to an act of tyranny on the part of his master, he left him and went to France, where he studied the sculptor's art for about two years. Having, apparently, learnt all he could there, he again set off on his travels, this time to Italy, and spent some time both in Rome and Venice, executing, while in the latter city, a sumptuous monument representing the Siege of Candia and a naval engagement between the Venetians and the Turks, for one of the Procurators of St. Mark's. It seems probable that Bushnell considered that his training was now complete, for he returned to England and set up as a sculptor in London. Here he does not appear to have lacked patrons; indeed he

* A Welshman once claimed that his family was so illustrious that a member of it was represented on a monument in the Abbey, and being asked whereabouts, replied, "In the same monument with Squire Thynne, for he was his coachman."

received official recognition, soon after his return, for we find him, not long after, engaged on statues of Charles I. and Charles II., for the Royal Exchange, as well as one of Sir Thomas Gresham, destined for the same building.

It appears that he had been commissioned to execute statues of the whole of the kings of England, for the Royal Exchange, but happening to hear that another sculptor, who is said to have been Cibber, was making efforts to obtain the work, he refused to proceed with them, although he had already begun half a dozen or more. It is not known what motive induced him to act thus. Cibber was already too famous for Bushnell to wish to give him such a chance of exhibiting his skill, and so I fear that altruism cannot be regarded as the cause; more likely is it that he was unwilling to work in competition with another, as he might conceivably have been called upon to do, and, as the capriciousness of his temper has been recorded, a fit of annoyance may have determined him thus to throw up a promising and even a splendid commission. He was, however, responsible for the royal statues adorning Temple Bar, which are said to have been the best things he ever produced. Among his other works were a number of sepulchral monuments, chief of which was that to Lord Ashburnham in Ashburnham Church, Sussex; that to Mrs. Grew, wife of Dr. Grew, in Christ Church, Newgate Street; one for Lord Thomond, in Northamptonshire; and those of Cowley, the poet, and Sir Palmes Fairborne, in Westminster Abbey, for which Dryden wrote the epitaph, and the statue of John, Lord Mordaunt, on his tomb in Fulham Church, which Dallaway regards as a better specimen of his skill than some of those named can pretend to be. He is also said to have executed a bust of William Talman, the architect of Chatsworth, who was his contemporary.

This is not a very splendid total, but there is no doubt that Bushnell was also engaged in a variety of other work, much of it doubtless journeyman labour, and, were a reason wanted for the relatively few examples of his more

ambitious sculpture, it might easily be found in his curiously wayward temper and complex character; for, not content with following his own art, he must needs be continually dabbling in invention of one sort and another, sometimes based on a more or less sound theory, oftener being but childish attempts to prove what nobody had ever thought worth denying. Thus, having heard the famous Trojan Horse laughed at as a fable, incapable of being executed, he determined to demonstrate the contrary, to which end he designed and had made, in timber, a horse of such proportions that in the head alone a dozen people could sit round a table, the interior being lighted by two windows formed by the animal's eyes. This he intended should be covered with plaster, but before it was completed, a storm overthrew the effigy, and he lost £500 by the venture. Two vintners, recognising that there might be at least a *succès d'éstime*, if the structure was converted into a drinking booth, offered to erect it again at their own charges, but Bushnell was either too disappointed at the collapse of his toy, or was too furious at the thought of its being put to such vile uses, to comply with the suggestion.

Another of his abortive schemes was the bringing of coals to London from the North by vessels; but this, which really had in it, or should have had, the elements of success, landed him in still greater financial loss. To crown all he had purchased an estate in Kent, but there being some defect in the title, a law-suit was the consequence. He lost the case, and this seems to have given the final blow to his intellect, which must always have been a weak and unbalanced one. He died in 1701, and was buried in Paddington Church, although the registers, being defective for that year, contain no record of his decease. It is difficult to estimate the extent of Bushnell's powers as a sculptor. Such examples as are known to be his, do not indicate any great originality or depth of thought, and we know that, during his own day, he was accused of being unable to carve the naked figure and that his attempt to prove his critics in the wrong, by

producing a statue of Alexander the Great, was not a success. That he was, however, skilful in his representation of drapery, is allowed, and it is more than probable that had he not embarked on so many other projects alien to his art, he might, especially at such a period when sculpture could not boast many notable exponents, have continued to make a name for himself, far more widely known than his now is; he might, conceivably, have come down with the same sort of reputation among sculptors, as Kneller has done among painters; but he would hardly, I think, have done more.

Bushnell had two sons and a daughter, and as he left them all fairly well to do, notwithstanding his numerous monetary losses, and he certainly had no money with his wife, who was originally one of his master, Burman's, maid-servants, it seems fairly obvious that he must have been a successful, if not a notable, sculptor. Among his other ventures Bushnell built himself a large house in Park Lane; but at his death it was characteristically left unfinished, and, still more characteristically, was unprovided with floors or staircases! Here his two sons, after his death, lived in hermit fashion, never permitting any one to enter, and they are described as being sordid and unpractical, and saying the world had not been worthy of their father, which latter trait should be remembered in their favour. Vertue had long desired to see the interior of this strange abode, and in 1725, both the occupants being away on one of their rare excursions, his wish was gratified. He has left, among his MSS., an account of what he saw, notably a plaster model of Charles II. on horseback, broken and in ruins, the statue of Alexander already referred to, and the models of the kings which had been intended for the Royal Exchange. A large painting, representing a Triumph, in a state of decay, showed another direction which Bushnell's activity had taken, while still another was recalled by a thick bar of iron, which had been successfully divided by one of his inventions.

The name of the next sculptor to whom we come is better known than are those of his immediate predecessors

or contemporaries. *Francis Bird*, who has been called the "Founder of English Sculpture," if not a great artist—and he can certainly hardly claim that distinction—was at least a successful one, and during the reigns of Anne and George I. he represented practically alone what was good or bad in this phase of art during the first quarter of the eighteenth century; and it is pleasant to think that, as an Englishman, he to some extent filled the position which Roubiliac and Rysbrack were to occupy at a rather later period.

Bird was born in Piccadilly, always rather identified with the art, as being the spot where numerous statuaries' yards and workshops were once situated, in 1667. Nothing is known of his parentage, but his artistic descent is directly traceable to Cibber and Grinling Gibbon, on whom he at least attempted to model himself and to form his style. At the early age of eleven he was sent to Brussels, where he studied under a certain Cozens, who had once resided for a time in England, but of whom no other record has survived. Having apparently learnt all he could from this instructor, Bird set out for Rome, proceeding thither on foot it is said. Arrived there he placed himself under Le Gros, with whom, it seems likely, he imbibed better ideas than he was able to do in Flanders; for apart from his new master's capabilities, he was surrounded by all those wonderful relics of antiquity which could hardly fail to have an influence on an impressionable youth. In 1686* Bird returned to England, where Grinling Gibbon and Caius Gabriel Cibber were then practically dividing the art of sculpture between them. He sought employment and found it with both in turn, so that his novitiate may be regarded as having been curiously varied and complete. A second journey to Rome, again undertaken on foot, seems to have satisfied Bird's insatiable desire for knowledge and instruction, and on his return to England, he set up for himself, having practically succeeded to Cibber's large and remunerative practice.

* Redgrave gives 1716 as the date of his return, but Cibber, under whom he is said to have worked, had then been dead six years.

The work which first drew general attention to Bird, and which is not only by far the best example of his skill, but is even regarded by some as the finest specimen of the sculpture of the time, was the monument to Dr. Busby, the famous master of Westminster School, who became later Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, and is said to have "birched the whole Bench of Bishops." This excellent example of the sculptor's skill * stands in the nave of Westminster Abbey, and well holds its place even among the many fine monuments by which it is surrounded. Walpole tells us that Busby "would never permit his picture to be drawn, and the moment he was dead, his friends had a cast in plaster taken from his face, and thence a drawing in crayons, from which White engraved his print, and Bird carved his image." It is certainly in this work that the truth of the assertion that "Cibber and Gibbon were both more or less responsible for Bird, who set himself to profit by their examples," is best attested; but at the same time, it is so much better than the generality of this sculptor's productions, that it can hardly be regarded as characteristic, and should rather be looked upon as one of those works in which men, not essentially great, have yet occasionally risen almost to greatness. "Though not in itself superexcellent," says Mr. Ernest Radford, "it is yet a marvel of art if we compare it only with other works by the same hand."

The friendship and patronage of Wren did much towards forwarding Bird's interests. At this time the finishing touches were being put to St. Paul's, and Bird was one of those engaged on its final embellishment. His chief contribution was the group in the pediment at the west end, depicting "The Conversion of St. Paul." It is 64 ft. by 18 ft., and contains eighteen equestrian figures as well as numerous others, and the cost of it was £1180; while for the bas-reliefs under the portico, also executed by Bird, £450 was paid. Walpole, speaking of the pediment, says: "Any statuary was good enough for an ornament at that height, and a good statuary had been

* Nollekens on one occasion spoke of it as being "very good."

too good." There is some truth in this, although the principle is obviously a defective one. The fact is the work represents the good and bad qualities of the sculptor and cannot rightly be described as either wholly good or wholly bad. It is certainly over-elaborated, but Bird might have argued logically enough that this was necessary on account of its distance from the spectator, an argument which rather obviously swayed him when depicting the stone rays of sunlight, which he has painfully exaggerated in order to produce an effect; this they certainly do, although the effect is gained by the overwhelming of the rest of the composition.

But there is another point which has not, I think, been sufficiently considered, and it is this: the purely decorative additions to a masterpiece of architecture, must always, to a large extent, be dominated, if not overwhelmed, by the beauty of the building lines. When we look at some great edifice we instinctively consider it as a whole, and, regarding it so, the subsidiary ornamentation becomes merged in the main outlines of the erection, and if the former are not too painfully aggressive they sink, as it were, into the main scheme of the work and become mere episodes in its story. It is for this reason that both good and bad sculpture, so applied, is apt to be inaccurately judged, and this is why Walpole's remark contains a certain amount of truth.

In addition to his work on the fabric (including five figures of Apostles, twice the size of life, on the roofs of the transept), Bird was employed to carve the statue of Queen Anne which for long stood in front of the cathedral, but which is to-day replaced by Mr. Belt's copy. This statue, together with the pedestal and the four figures surrounding the latter, cost £1130, a sufficiently large sum to show that Bird's reputation was at least secure during his lifetime. It is curious how much indiscriminate abuse has been showered on this work. The author of the "Abrégé," quoted by Walpole, seems to have begun it in his remark that "A l'égard de la sculpture (en Angleterre) le marbre gémit, pour ainsi dire, sous des

ciseaux aussi peu habiles que ceux qui ont exécuté le groupe de la Reine Anne, placé devant l'Eglise de St. Paul." Garth in what Walpole terms "admirable lines," carried it on with his satire; but Garth, who may have known something about medicine and certainly knew less about poetry, has never been credited with any technical or critical knowledge of the fine arts (except in that all cultivated people suppose themselves connoisseurs) and is much more likely to have written for the sake of saying something smart than because he really had anything pertinent to say. And from Garth's day till the year 1885, when the mutilated remains of the statue were removed (and, by-the-bye, replaced by an almost exact copy), there has been no lack of detractors, many of whom consisted of that class of critics who seem to think that disparagement is a sign of knowledge and that the only way to cry themselves up is by running down the work of others. The statue may not have been a striking example of the sculptor's art; very few in London are, for the matter of that; but it hardly deserved the abuse which was levelled at it. It was, like much of Bird's work, at least inspired by that Renaissance impulse which delighted in decorative *motifs* before all things and which, so long as it could give free play to light and shade in drapery, and embellish its work with rather florid attributes, seemed to care little for natural pose or simple effect.

Among other works by Bird may be mentioned the monuments to Congreve, Killigrew, Dean Sprat, and Shadwell, to J. E. Grabe, a German scholar domiciled in England, and to Sidney, Earl Godolphin, of whom Charles II. once said that "he was never in the way and never out of the way," in Westminster Abbey; and the statue of Wolsey which stands in a niche in Tom Tower of Christ Church, Oxford; and which was set up when Wren completed the tower with his Gothic cone, which if not faultless is yet so "inevitable" that we cannot imagine it in any other form. Bird also produced the brass figure of Henry VI. at Eton, which Walpole, not untruly, designates as "a wretched performance indeed."

Far more successful was the sculptor in the large sepulchral monument erected to the memory of Viscount Mordaunt,* in Fulham Church, for which he received £250, representing the amount paid for the carving alone.

Another magnificent monument in which Bird had a hand, was that to the Duke of Newcastle, erected by his daughter, the Countess of Oxford, in Westminster Abbey. The monument was designed by Gibbs, who is said to have "staked his immortality" upon its success; but Bird executed the work, and to him is alone due the recumbent effigy of the Duke. This has no little merit, and should be remembered to Bird's credit, when one gazes at another monument in the Abbey by his hand, viz., the tomb of Sir Cloudesley Shovel, erected at Queen Anne's expense, and probably as bad an example of the sculptor's art as you will find in England. Indeed there are those who call it one of the worst in the world, and we know that Pope applied to it the epithet of "the bathos of sculpture"; while Addison once remarked, in the *Spectator*, that "Instead of the brave, rough English Admiral, which was the distinguishing feature of that plain, gallant man, he is represented on his tomb by the figure of a beau dressed in a long periwig and reposing himself upon velvet cushions under a canopy of state."

The fact is that Bird was one of the most unequal of artists: at one time producing what may be called a relative masterpiece, in his Dr. Busby, at another time sinking to mere journeyman work, exaggerated out of all seeming by a mania for elaborative accessory, as in his Sir Cloudesley Shovel. Nagler says of his work that it is barbarous in style and devoid of any charm, and later critics have, more or less, echoed his words; but if not a great sculptor, Bird at least succeeded in becoming a popular one. Art and literature at this period form a very curious contrast. The latter was classical, restrained, and included some of the masterpieces of the writer's art; sculpture and painting were boisterous, exuberant,

* Of which Bushnell, as we have seen, carved the statue.

JOHN MICHAEL RYSBRACK

exaggerated, and, to use again the untranslatable French word, *flamboyant* to a painful degree; what wonder then that a man, admittedly no genius, should have been swept along in the current of popular predilection? Rather should it be remembered to his credit that he was, on occasion, not wholly uninspired and even sometimes approached, if he never quite reached, perfection.

After an honourable and strenuous life, Bird died, in 1731, at the age of sixty-four. The short obituary notice of him in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for February 1731, contains the following words: "Mr. Francis Bird, a famous statuary, as the many lofty tombs and magnificent monuments in Westminster Abbey and other churches sufficiently testify."

If the reign of Anne, so far as sculpture is concerned, cannot be said to have been particularly notable, those of her immediate successors may be regarded, in this respect, as important landmarks in the history of the art in this country. Unfortunately for our *amour propre*, this distinction was due, not to native talent, but to foreigners domiciled in our midst. Of these men, three stand forth conspicuously: Rysbrack, Scheemakers, and above all, Roubiliac. The first and last of these are well known and their work has been compared often enough, although there was not a great deal in common in their methods. Of the second, so little was at one time known, that Walpole, and therefore the more industrious Vertue, on whose foundations Walpole built the superstructure of his "Anecdotes of Painting," omitted his name altogether from their collections. These three men were contemporaries, although a few years seniority in age gives Rysbrack the claim to be first dealt with.

According to the best accounts, *John Michael Rysbrack* was born in Antwerp, on June 24, 1693. His father, Peter Rysbrack, was a painter, who had lived for some time in this country in his youth, but subsequently went to Paris, where he married; and later still sojourned in Brussels before finally returning to his native town,

where he died in 1726, at the age of eighty. Of the early years of his more illustrious son, we know nothing, until we come to his twenty-seventh year (1720), when we find him arriving in England, probably actuated in this choice of domicile by the fact that his father had been here before him, and, doubtless, had made friends who would be likely to be useful to the younger man.

As was not unusual, in such circumstances, Rysbrack first set himself to the modelling of small figures in plaster and clay, rather as specimens of what he could do, and as a sort of advertisement, than anything else. The fact, however, proves that he had already served his apprenticeship abroad, even if he had never completed his novitiate by the then almost recognised necessity of a visit to Italy. His first patron appears to have been the Earl of Nottingham, of whom he modelled a bust, and so successfully, that he at once attracted attention and began, to use Walpole's words, "to be employed on large works, particularly monuments."

About this time, James Gibbs, the famous architect, was being employed on the erection of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, St. Mary-le-Strand, and other important works; having taken, to some extent, the position formerly held by Wren. The architect quickly recognised that here, to his hand, he had a young sculptor who could not only help to embellish with carvings the buildings he was erecting, but could also undertake the execution of some of the monuments which he was being commissioned to produce. Walpole, who was never friendly to Gibbs, insinuates that many of the latter were entirely executed by Rysbrack, and that the architect not only gained the chief credit of them, but also benefited, in a pecuniary sense, by their production. But even were this the case it would not prove Gibbs to have been a hard taskmaster or an unfair employer of labour. Rysbrack was quite old enough to look after himself, and the fact that he was taken under the wing of the most fashionable and successful architect of the day, was sufficient, in itself, to more than

repay what work he did under his patron's *ægis*. We are told that for the statues on the monument to Prior, in Westminster Abbey,* Gibbs received £100 apiece, and that he paid Rysbrack £35 for each figure; but, apart from the fact that 35 per cent. does not seem bad pay for an employer to allow a workman, it must be remembered that Gibbs could have obtained the aid of a journeyman sculptor, whose work would have been deemed adequate, for even less, and that Lord Oxford would not have given the commission to a man, however good, who had not already made a name for himself. The earlier years, the unknown years, as we may call them, of men who have subsequently achieved distinction, are full of these incidents in which the parsimony, as it is termed, of their employers is arraigned because of the pupil's later fame. The point is that, at the time, the pupil was glad enough of the opportunity of distinguishing himself, as he might, otherwise, never have been able to do, under the wing of some one who had already obtained success.

"The statuary (Rysbrack) though no vain man, felt his own merit, and shook off his dependence on the architect, as he became more known and admired." Thus Walpole, who is merely chronicling the usual process (where a pupil finds he has gained all he wants from a master, and can at length afford to act for himself), but who seems to think that he is illustrating a kind of nobility of action in Rysbrack.

Before leaving Gibbs, Rysbrack carved, from his master's designs, the large monument to John Holles, Duke of Newcastle,† in Westminster Abbey, in 1723; the first important work—in size, at any rate—which he undertook; the memorial to Ben Jonson, also in the Abbey, which was erected by the Earl of Oxford from Gibbs's designs, in 1737, but was wholly executed by Rysbrack,

* The poet left £500 for "This last piece of human vanity," as he calls it. The bust in it was by A. Coysevox, and had been presented to Prior by Louis XIV., in 1714.

† The figures, as we have seen, were, however, by Francis Bird.

and one to Dr. Freind, also designed by Gibbs. Before saying anything about those works for which he was entirely responsible, I may remind the reader that Rysbrack executed a few monuments designed by William Kent. Of them the most important were those to Earl Stanhope, in which a sitting figure of Minerva and certain bas-reliefs are introduced, and to Sir Isaac Newton,* consisting of a statue with bas-reliefs at the base, which cost £500, both of which may be seen in Westminster Abbey.

Perhaps the most important of Rysbrack's individual productions is the superb monument, as Sir George Scharf termed it, to the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, and their two sons who died young, in the chapel at Blenheim. This fine work consists of figures of the Great Duke and his imperious Duchess; beneath which is a sarcophagus supported by colossal figures, representing Fame and History, and below this, a bas-relief depicting the capture of Marshal Tallard. It was executed in 1733.

Another example of Rysbrack's sculpture, also at Blenheim, is the statue of Queen Anne, which stands in the Library, and bears beneath it, the following inscription:

TO THE MEMORY OF QUEEN ANNE
UNDER WHOSE AUSPICES
JOHN, DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH
CONQUERED
AND TO WHOSE MUNIFICENCE
HE AND HIS POSTERITY
WITH GRATITUDE
OWE THE POSSESSION OF BLENHEIM.
A.D. MDCCXXVI.

In the same year in which he executed the monument in Blenheim Chapel, Rysbrack produced his equestrian

* Pope wrote an inscription for this which was not, however, used; but the last two lines have become famous: "Nature and Nature's Laws, lay hid in night: God said, *Let Newton be!* and all was light."

statue, in bronze, of William III.* at Bristol, for which he received £1800. It was erected in the centre of Queen's Square in 1736, and was commissioned by the Corporation of Bristol. It would seem that the statue had been open to competition, as Scheemakers also made a model for it, which, although rejected, was considered so meritorious that the sculptor was awarded £50 as a solatium.

From this time forward, for a number of years, Rysbrack continued to be the fashionable sculptor, and the number of works he turned out is an eloquent proof of this. Although, as we have seen, he produced various large monuments (in addition to those mentioned, that to Miss Stanley, with an epitaph by James Thomson, in the Holy Rhood Church, near Southampton, another in Lymington Church, one to John Sympson, in Canterbury Cathedral, dated 1752, and another to Captain Powlett, in West Grinstead Church, may be named), a large part of his industry was expended on busts of which examples may be seen all over the country. Thus beyond those I have referred to as being in Westminster Abbey, where are also those of Sir Godfrey Kneller, Milton, Richard Kane, Nicholas Rome, erected by his widow, and Gay, set up by the Duke and Duchess of Newcastle, on which appears the poet's own couplet,

> Life is a jest, and all things show it;
> I thought so once, and now I know it,

as well as a monument to Admiral Vernon, "Old Grog," with figures of Britannia and Victory, there are busts of the second, third, and fourth Dukes of Beaufort at Badminton; of Dr. Radcliffe, in the Radcliffe Library at Oxford; of George II. at Greenwich; of Sir Hans Sloane, formerly in the garden of his residence at Chelsea; of Charles I., copied from Bernini's famous work and executed, on commission, for George Augustus Selwyn; and of Palladio, Fiamingo, and Inigo Jones, once at Chiswick House, from his hand.

Of other monuments which Rysbrack produced may

* There is a fine bronze in the Royal Collection which was probably modelled from this statue.

be named those to Charles, Duke of Somerset, and his wife, in Salisbury Cathedral; to Lady Bessborough, at Derby; to Lady Folkestone at Coleshill, Berks; as well as a Hercules and a Flora, formerly at Stourhead, and a statue of Locke in the Library at Christ Church, Oxford, once attributed to Roubiliac, which was completed by Rysbrack in 1757.

The busts of Palladio, Fiamingo, and Inigo Jones were produced, it is said, as a practical answer to those who, attracted by the rising of a new star in Scheemakers, were gradually deserting Rysbrack, as they did still more when Roubiliac appeared as a competitor to him somewhat later. According to Gilpin, "It was the work of emulation. Rysbrack had long enjoyed the public favour without a rival. Scheemakers first arose as a competitor, and afterwards Roubiliac, both artists of great merit: the latter of uncommon abilities." There seems no doubt that these productions stayed for a while the ebb-tide of the sculptor's popularity. But they were not sufficient to stem it entirely, and the Hercules which has been called his *chef-d'œuvre*, "an exquisite summary of his skill, knowledge, and judgment," was a final attempt to assert his claims to be considered *the* sculptor of the time. "This athletic statue," writes Walpole, "for which he borrowed the head of the Farnesian god, was compiled from various parts and limbs of seven or eight of the strongest and best made men in London, chiefly the bruisers and boxers of the then flourishing amphitheatre for boxing, the sculptor selecting the parts which were the most truly formed in each. The arms were Broughton's, the breast a celebrated coachman's, a bruiser, and the legs were those of Ellis the painter, a great frequenter of that gymnasium. As the games of that Olympic academy frequently terminated to its heroes at the gallows, it was soon after suppressed by Act of Parliament; so that in reality Rysbrack's Hercules is the monument of those gladiators. It was purchased by Mr. Hoare, and is the principal ornament of the noble temple of Stourhead." *

* "Anecdotes of Painting."

Notwithstanding his industry and for a number of years his acceptance by the world of art and fashion, Rysbrack never succeeded in making a large fortune, and although the fact of his having a public sale of such works as remained on his hands, some time before his death, does not conclusively prove this, the circumstance seems, in his case, to have been made necessary by lack of money. He held more than one of these auctions, and at that which took place in 1765, thirty-seven "lots" were offered, consisting of vases, medallions, busts, models in terra-cotta, marble, and bronze. The highest individual price realised was £191 2*s*., and the whole proceeds of the sale amounted to £991 10*s*.

In another sale were included a large number of his drawings, which were, we are told, "conceived and executed in the true taste of the great Italian masters." Referring to these, Smith, in his "Life of Nollekens," remarks that "though certainly considerably mannered, (they) possess a fertility of invention and a spirit of style in their execution seldom emanating from the hand of a sculptor of modern times. They are for the most part washed in bistre, and are frequently to be met with."

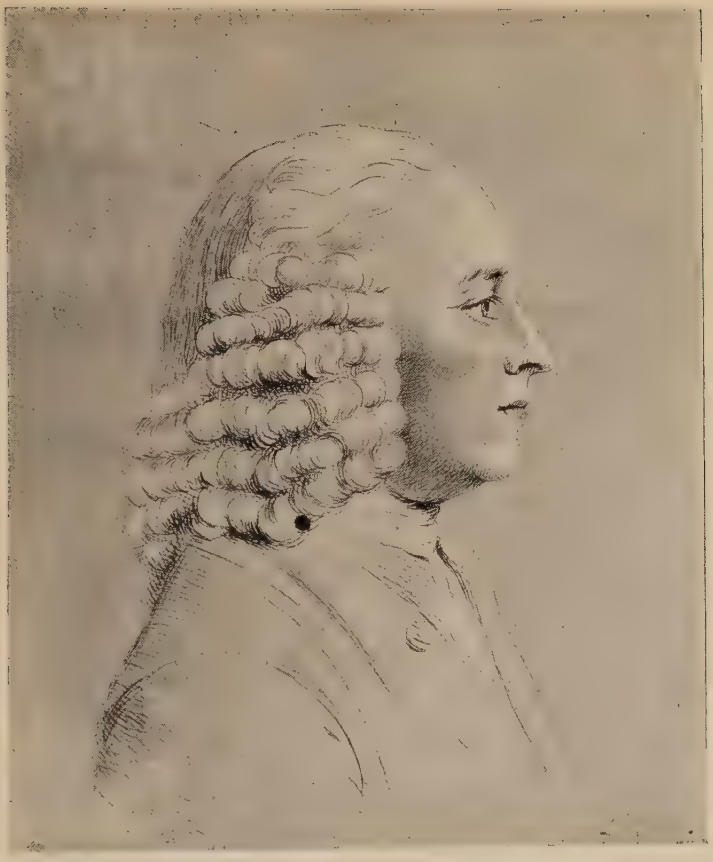
Rysbrack carried on his profession at a house in Vere Street, where he established one of those "yards" or manufactories of sculpture which were not infrequently to be met with in London in the eighteenth century, and where he was assisted by numerous pupils, of whom Delvaux, about whom I must say a word presently, was the most conspicuous.

Of his private life little is known, that little being preserved by Rogers in certain notes prefixed to his "Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings." From this source, however, we learn that Rysbrack was religiously inclined and that he helped those of his relatives who required assistance, with money. Indeed, these drains on his resources were apparently so numerous and his good-nature was such, that to them Rogers attributes the fact that he was never able to accumulate a large fortune. He retired from active business when he was seventy years of age (1763), and his death occurred on

January 8, 1770, after which event a further sale of his remaining collection took place.

Walpole's silence concerning the next sculptor of the period, is the more curious as *Peter Scheemakers* was an artist of no small importance, and his name, though nothing else about him, is mentioned in the "Anecdotes of Painting," in connection with the model he made for the statue of William III. at Bristol, of which I have already spoken. Some excuse is forthcoming so far as the absence of any record of his private life is concerned, for, as a matter of fact, there is little to relate; but that Walpole as well as Vertue should have overlooked the numerous evidences of the sculptor's industry, and in some cases, success, is rather mysterious, and would almost suggest a purposed silence, unless it is due to a curious oversight. Wornum collected a few data about the career of Scheemakers, and on this one has, in the absence of other material, chiefly to rely.

He was born at Antwerp in 1691, and was thus Rysbrack's senior by two years. His father was also a sculptor, and from him, as well as from that Delvaux already referred to, the young Scheemakers gained his knowledge of the rudiments of the art. As a young man he is recorded as having visited Denmark, and in 1728 he set out from that country for Rome on foot. Unfortunately we know nothing of his doings in Italy, but we may take it for granted that he studied the relics of ancient art there, and that he came into touch with that numerous band of sculptors whose headquarters were in the Eternal City. From Rome he came to England, and found work with both Plumière and Francis Bird. He seems first to have lived in St. Martin's Lane, but in 1741 he removed to more commodious premises in Vine Street. It was about the year 1733 that he attempted to gain the commission for the statue of King William. Not improbably the disappointment attending his failure in this (although, as we know, his attempt was considered as so meritorious that he was awarded a solatium of £50 by the Bristol Corporation) caused him again to travel to Rome. However, he could not have stayed long there,



PETER SCHEEMAKERS

for in 1735 he returned to England, where he resided without a break till 1770. His second appearance here was the first pause given to the hitherto unchallenged popularity of Rysbrack, the work by which the new man achieved his first success being the execution of the statue of Shakespeare in Westminster Abbey, which had been designed by Kent,* whose "fashionable name," as Walpole terms it, undoubtedly did much towards this result. The work itself can hardly be regarded as a masterpiece, but it had been "invented" by the fashionable jack-of-all-trades of art of the period, and it was carved by a new man, both facts quite sufficient to give it an exaggerated merit in the eyes of a not very critical generation.†

Although Scheemakers cannot truthfully be said to have been equal in artistic merit or invention to Rysbrack and still less to Roubiliac, who was, by far, the greatest of the trio, he was sufficiently good to prove a formidable rival to both, and just as he at length outdistanced the former, so he became as popular as the latter. A reason for this may be, perhaps, found in the fact that he greatly furthered that love for busts of the illustrious ones of the past and the noble ones of his own day. A sepulchral monument could, after all, only be occasionally seen by a patron, but a bust of himself or of some notable forebear, or classic writer or warrior, could stand always in his sight, above his books, or in his entrance hall, and could indicate to all and sundry his regard for his progenitors or his love for the classics. And so, I think, we may, to some extent, trace Scheemakers's success to his having largely reintroduced this domestic form of sculpture, as it may be termed. It was not, therefore, inappropriate that Scheemakers's most illustrious pupil, Nollekens, should have been chiefly famous in this branch of the sculptor's art.

* Another monument executed by Scheemakers from Kent's designs was that to General Monk, also in the Abbey.

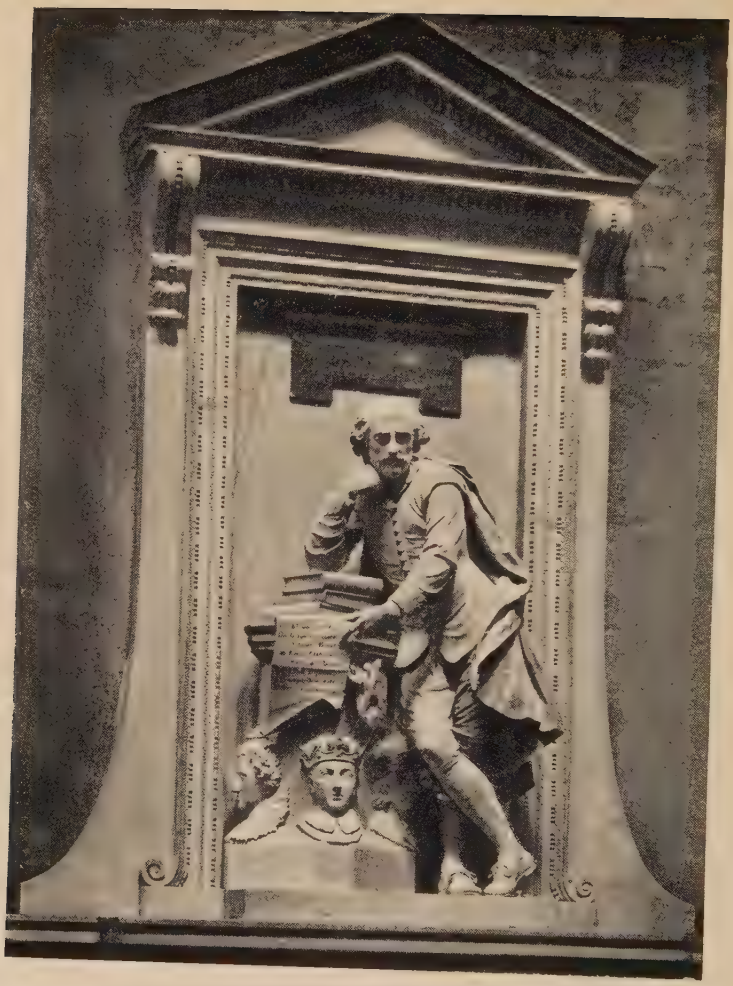
† Walpole, speaking of Rysbrack's growing loss of popularity and regarding this work as one of its causes, says: "I shall say something hereafter on the defects of that design," by which, I presume, he did intend to say something about Scheemakers.

Besides the statue of Shakespeare, already referred to, several other memorials in Westminster Abbey are from Scheemakers's hand, notably the figure of the Duchess, on the monument of Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire; * that of Sir Charles Watson, a terrible affair, designed by James (Athenian) Stuart, which, with its towering palm branches and Oriental figures, wholly spoils the contour of the adjacent arches; of Admiral Sir Charles Wager, with allegorical figures, and a bas-relief representing the departure of the Spanish treasure-ships in the West Indies; and those to the memory of Sir Henry Belasyse, Admiral Sir John Balchen, Lord Aubrey Beauclerk, General Percy Kirk (of "Kirk's Lambs" notoriety), Sir John Woodward, Lord Howe, and Dr. Hugh Chamberlain.† There are, too, four busts in the Abbey, carved by him: those of Dr. Mead, Dr. Freind, John Dryden, set up in 1731, and replacing an earlier bust, and Horneck, the military engineer; while one of Sir Hans Sloane, from his hand, is in the British Museum.

Of his work scattered about various parts of the country, one of the most important examples is the group of the Duke of Kent, with his two wives, and daughters, at Fletton, in Bedfordshire. This group, which is executed in white marble, was produced in 1740. At Edenham, Lincolnshire, there may be seen his monument to the first and second Dukes of Ancaster, on which those noblemen are represented seated and habited as Romans. At Wimpole, Cambridgeshire, is his monument to Lord Chancellor Hardwicke; at Gosfield, Essex, one to the memory of J. Knight, Esq.; and at Staunton Hall, once the seat of Lord Ferrers, are busts of the Hon. Laurence Shirley, son of the first Earl Ferrers, and of his wife and four children; while the monument to Henry Petty, Earl of Shelburne, at Wycombe, Bucks, and the figure on a sarcophagus to the memory of Montague Gerrard Drake, at Amersham, are also by Scheemakers.

* In a volume of drawings by Roubiliac, Rysbrack, and Scheemakers, which once belonged to Nollekens, now in the Soane Museum, there is a sketch by Scheemakers of this monument.

† This was executed in conjunction with Delvaux.



MONUMENT TO SHAKESPEARE
By Scheemakers

Besides this not inconsiderable total, the sculptor executed a statue of Sir John Barnard, for the Royal Exchange; of Admiral Pocock, Major Lawrence, and Lord Clive, for the India House; of Edward VI., in bronze, for St. Thomas's Hospital, and of Thomas Guy, for Guy's Hospital, a figure which still stands in the forecourt of that institution. He also produced a colossal statue of George II., a bust of Earl Temple, and life-size statues of Lycurgus, Socrates, Homer, and Epaminondas, for Stowe Park; and for the same place he executed, in rivalry with Delvaux, two marble groups, one representing Vertumnus and Pomona, the other, Venus and Adonis.

This does not exhaust Scheemakers's achievements, but it is sufficient to indicate the extent and variety of his work. His headquarters, in London, were situated in Vine Street, Piccadilly, and it was here that young Nollekens came to him, as a pupil, in 1750, working under "his friendly master," as Smith phrases it, "full ten years, without the exchange of one unpleasant word."

Scheemakers remained in England till 1770, about which time he returned to Antwerp, where he shortly afterwards died, having reached the ripe age of eighty-nine. He had a son, Thomas, whose dates are 1740–1808, who was also a not unsuccessful sculptor.

Laurent Delvaux (1695–1778), whom it is convenient to mention here, because, although senior to Scheemakers, he is largely identified with him and some of his work, was a pupil of Plumière and afterwards of Francis Bird. He accompanied Scheemakers to Italy in 1728, and having stayed there some four or five years, during which time he found plenty of employment, especially at the hands of the Portuguese Minister in that country, he returned to England in 1733. While here he executed a group formerly at Stowe, and a statue of Hercules for Earl Tilney at Wanstead. The figure of Time on the Duke of Buckingham's monument in the Abbey was also by him, and there is a sleeping Venus at Holkham from his hand. But perhaps his best-known work is the bronze lion, about which so many stories clustered, formerly on the top of

Northumberland House, Charing Cross, and now at Syon House, Isleworth. Delvaux, who did not remain long in this country, afterwards went to Brussels, of which city he was probably a native. He had, while in Italy, received an introduction from the Pope, Clement XIII., to the Papal Nuncio in Brussels, and through the instrumentality of the latter, was made chief sculptor to the Archduchess Marie Elizabeth and the Emperor Charles VI. On the death of the latter, he entered the service of Charles, Duke of Lorraine, in the same capacity, in 1750. Towards the end of his life he retired to Nivelles, where he died on February 24, 1778. Isaac Whood painted his portrait while he was in this country, a portrait that was engraved by Alexander van Halcken. It represents him wearing a turban and clothed in a fur-trimmed gown, and resting his left hand on the head of the Hercules which, from this circumstance, we may suppose him to have regarded as his *chef-d'œuvre.**

The name of *Roubiliac* is better known than that of any other sculptor of this period; indeed it would not, perhaps, be too much to say that it is one of the half-dozen best-remembered names in the history of sculpture. Yet, notwithstanding this, D'Argenville, who compiled and published only twenty-five years after Roubiliac's death, a record of the most notable French sculptors, omitted his name altogether from the list; and even Walpole, who recognised his merit, and should have had some reason to be proud of the part his brother, Sir Edward Walpole, played in making the sculptor known, accords him but a beggarly two dozen lines in his "Anec-

* Another foreigner who was working in England at this time was *Signor Guelfi*, who was brought hither by Lord Burlington, for whom he did much work at Chiswick and Burlington House. He also repaired the "Arundel Marbles" for Lord Pomfret, but not very successfully. A more important work was his monument to Mr. Secretary Craggs, in the Baptistery in Westminster Abbey, about which Pope, who wrote the inscription on it, took so much trouble. The poet considered that when set up it would be the finest figure in the place; but Pope was prejudiced, as any one may see by looking at the work. After living in England for twenty years, Guelfi returned to Bologna, his native town, in 1734.

dotes of Painting." Indeed, it is a curious fact that notices of the sculptor in contemporary literature are few and far between, and are confined to casual references in Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World," in Foote's farce, entitled "Taste," and in a poem by Lloyd, the friend of Charles Churchill. D'Argenville's silence has been regarded as arising from the fact that Roubiliac, though a Frenchman, and as such properly coming within the scope of his work, lived and laboured chiefly in this country, and that, as Cunningham says, "he was known to the world through his English works alone." But this very circumstance should, one would think, have caused Walpole to take particular care to find out, and set down, as he might have done with little trouble and much success, when the sculptor's fame was still fresh in the minds of living men, everything possible that could be gleaned about him and his works. But as Walpole says all he wants to about Wren in the space of four or five octavo pages, we need hardly look for any recondite reason to explain why a few lines were held by him sufficient in which to dismiss Roubiliac.

The unfortunate thing is that the silence of men who might easily have been able to glean authentic data, has resulted in our being left in painful ignorance of many incidents in the sculptor's life about which it would have been helpful and interesting to know; and although so much of his work speaks for itself, and enables us to judge his merits, in his private career many *lacunæ*, which it is now practically impossible to fill up, exist.*

Louis Francis Roubillac (Anglicè *Roubiliac*) was born at Lyons, towards the close of the seventeenth century, and although the actual year is not known, 1695 is generally regarded as the date of his birth. His artistic training was carried on first under his kinsman, Nicolas Coustous, and then under Balthazar of Dresden, sculptor to the Elector of Saxony. We are not told that he had any other instruction, and he was one of the few artists

* The best source of information is M. Le Roy de Sainte-Croix's "Vie et Ouvrages de L. F. Roubillac," 1882.

of that period who did not begin their artistic careers by at least paying a flying visit to Italy. In other respects his education seems to have been carefully attended to, and he is said not only to have possessed an accurate acquaintance with French literature, but to have had an unusually close knowledge of the poetry of his native land, occasionally making excursions into verse himself, with more or less success. Like many of his countrymen, however, he seems to have found difficulty in mastering the English language, for although he lived for over forty years in this country, he never succeeded in overcoming this, and, to the end of his life, spoke broken English, and if he enabled himself to be understood, it was as much as he did.

The year 1720 is generally regarded as the date of his arrival in this country, although as he is known to have gained the second Grand Prix of the Académie Royale de Peinture, with a work representing "Daniel saving the Chaste Susanna," in 1730, it seems more than probable that his first appearance in our midst was subsequent to this year.

With his coming to these shores a story—perhaps legendary, but still a story—is connected. According to this anecdote, an Englishman strolling about in a French town, presumably Lyons, was attracted by some clay models exhibiting more than usual promise, and having made a note of their producer's name, passed on his way. Some years later, a friend in England asked this very traveller for his advice as to the best man to undertake a piece of sculpture which he wished executed, and . . . but, as has been well said, when you know the end of a story, the story is told, and you wi l, of course, realise that Roubiliac was the sculptor sent for to execute the work. The tale has a ring of familiarity about it, besides being somewhat vague and inconclusive, which leaves one rather sceptical. Nor does it much matter under what conditions Roubiliac came to England; the important point is that he did come, and for a time met with such little success that he was employed as a journeyman in the yard of Thomas

LOUIS FRANCIS ROUBILIAC

Carter,* of Knightsbridge, the turner-out of now unconsidered monuments; while he is also said to have spent some time, in a like manner, with Cheere,† whose statuary yard in Piccadilly was at that time a well-known centre of sculptural activity. Although there does not seem much doubt that Roubiliac's native talent would, sooner or later, have distinguished him from among the sculptors who were then at work in this country—Rysbrack and Scheemakers among them—it is said that he owed his first step towards success to Sir Edward Walpole, under the following circumstances. The anecdote used to be told by Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was intimately acquainted with Roubiliac, and is thus related by Northcote, so that there is perhaps more truth in it than in many such stories:

"Very soon after he arrived in England, and was then working as journeyman to Carter, a maker of monuments, having spent an evening at Vauxhall, on his return he picked up a pocket-book, which he found to enclose several bank-notes of value. He immediately advertised the circumstance, and a gentleman of fashion (Sir Edward Walpole ‡) claimed the pocket-book. Justly appreciating and remunerating the integrity of the poor young man, and the specimens of his skill and talent which he exhibited, he promised to patronise him through life, and he faithfully performed that promise."

It is said that the only recompense Roubiliac would accept from Sir Edward was the gift of a buck, which his patron sent him annually.

It would appear that Sir Edward recommended Roubiliac to Cheere, and that the latter in turn introduced him to Jonathan Tyers, at that time engaged

* He was a *protégé* of Jervas, the portrait-painter, and executed the bas-relief on Colonel Townsend's monument in Westminster Abbey, in conjunction with Eckstein. Flaxman had a very high opinion of this work.

† "The man at Hyde Park Corner," as Lord Ogleby, in "The Clandestine Marriage," calls him. A number of monuments by him are in Westminster Abbey, notably to Sir Thomas Hardy, John Conduitt, Hugh Boulter, Samuel Bradford, and Dean Wilcocks, on whose tomb is a representation of the west towers of the Abbey, erected during his deanship.

‡ Le Roy de Sainte-Croix gives the name as that of Sir Robert Walpole!

(1732) on his Vauxhall speculation, and for whom, as we know, both Cheere and Hogarth were engaged in decorating the gardens with statues and paintings. It was, too, at Cheere's suggestion that a statue of Handel formed one of the embellishments of the place, and this statue was the work of Roubiliac. According to Cunningham, it stood in the gardens as early as 1744, although Smith,* giving a receipt dated June 9, 1750, wherein the sculptor writes, "I promise to pay Jona. Tyers twenty pounds on demand, value received," seems to infer that this transaction had something to do with this particular work; whereas it rather obviously indicates that Tyers had lent Roubiliac the money, and that the document was an I.O.U. for the amount, and cannot be regarded as being in the nature of money paid on account for work to be done by Roubiliac; whether that particular work was the statue of Handel, or anything else.† According to Walpole, this statue at once "fixed Roubiliac's fame."

Smith, in his "Life of Nollekens," gives the following account of the work and its later history: "The statue of Handel," he says, "of which there is a beautiful engraving by Bartolozzi, after being moved to various situations in the gardens, was at length conveyed to the house of Mr. Barrett, at Stockwell, and thence to the entrance hall of the residence of his son, the Rev. Jonathan Tyers Barrett, D.D., of No. 14 Duke Street, Westminster. It is now (1828) to be sold, and may be seen in the hall of Mr. Newton's private house, No. 69 Dean Street, Soho. When Mr. Nollekens was asked by the late Mr. Tyers what he considered that statue to be worth, he immediately answered, 'A thousand guineas.'"‡

Another early commission which Roubiliac received, on the recommendation of Sir Edward Walpole, was

* "Life of Nollekens."

† £300 was the price paid by Tyers for the statue. Roubiliac is also said to have executed a Milton for Vauxhall.

‡ The model for the statue once belonged to Hudson, the painter, and was in his house at Twickenham, being on his death purchased by Nollekens for £5. At the disposal of Nollekens' collection it became the property of Hamlet, the silversmith, for ten guineas.

the execution of certain of the busts which adorn Trinity College, Dublin, among which was the famous one of Swift.*

The sculptor's studio at this time was in Peter's Court, St. Martin's Lane,† and here he began to be busily engaged, not only on these busts, but also on the many commissions that were now given him. Of these one of the most important was that for the monument to John, Duke of Argyle, on which he was employed, again at the instance of Sir Edward Walpole. This fine work, Roubiliac's first attempt at such an ambitious undertaking (it dates from 1743), may be seen in the south transept of Westminster Abbey, where it remains as one of the best examples of the sculptor's genius, the figure of Eloquence on it being a particularly masterly achievement.

The Duke, warrior and statesman, is shown dying at the base of a pyramid on which a figure typifying History is inscribing the record of his splendid deeds, Minerva looking on regretfully the while, and Eloquence voicing the sadness of his end. It will be observed that History, in writing the words, "John Duke of Argyle and Gr——," is executing a not ineffective aposiopesis, for grief is supposed to check her before she can complete the word Greenwich (which title expired with the Duke).

Roubiliac could not entirely discard the usual allegorical stock-in-trade so fashionable in his day, nor does he combine the figures as ably as one would wish; but where he advances so far beyond other contemporary sculptors is in the beauty, the truth to life, and the animation observable in the various figures, and Canova recognised this when he once said, "This is one of the noblest statues I have seen in England."

In this work Roubiliac shows how great a reformer he was in the art of sculpture, in replacing the earlier literalness of figure by a freer and more poetic conception.

* As Swift was not in England after 1727, Mr. Austin Dobson concludes that this bust was not modelled from life, but probably based on Jervas's portrait.

† The studio was subsequently demolished, and the site, for a time, occupied by a Society of Friends' meeting-house.

His predecessors seem to have been content to produce copies of clothes covering a dead figure; he made his men alive, and so achieved the true significance of a posthumous statue, in helping, by its aid, to recall not merely the features, but the spirit which once characterised the original. He infused something of his own personality—quick, vivacious, animated, enthusiastic (you can see the divine afflatus which possessed him, in Carpentière's portrait)—into the stone or marble which was vivified by his touch, and which, like Pygmalion's statue, seems almost to breathe. It is hardly to be wondered at that a man who could do this to such a degree, should have been able to astonish his generation and to leave a legacy behind him which will live among the finest achievements of modern sculpture. One likes to think of him, rolling his eyes in a fine frenzy, clasping his hands in an ecstasy as some new idea rushed into his active brain, flying from his table to his studio to stamp the image on a marble block, going off to worship Cibber's "Melancholy and Madness" in that splendid enthusiasm that knew not envy and was ever ready to recognise genius. One cannot imagine anything mean or petty about such a character, just as one can see nothing weak or hesitating in the works of his hand. And there was nothing of this in Roubiliac; he was a genius; and those who in his own day placed him on a level with such men as Rysbrack and Scheemakers—good sculptors as, within their limits, both were—did so because they did not recognise genius, or because their minds were not prepared to realise the true greatness of the man and the importance of the innovations he introduced. Had Vertue or Walpole understood his many excellences, would they, think you, have been satisfied with the meagre record of the man, which they have left us? One cannot but fear that the popularity Roubiliac achieved was largely due to the fact that he was a new man with new methods, and not because his age was capable of recognising his real importance.

The works of Roubiliac are not so numerous as his long life and untiring industry might lead us to imagine;

but he spared no pains in their execution, having always rather an eye to fame than to the monetary recompense for the work in hand, although, as in the case of his statue of Duncan Forbes at Edinburgh, he was not, on occasion, above leaving those portions of the marble not exposed to view untouched by the chisel.

In Westminster Abbey there are seven specimens of his skill in varying degrees of excellence and importance. Of these, that to the Duke of Argyle has been already mentioned as being in the south transept. At the same part of the Abbey is his monument of Handel, which was, by-the-bye, the last work he completed, and in which the composer's ear was modelled from that of a Miss Rich, the daughter of one of his friends, because, he said, "The ear of Handel was so fine in music that it could only be represented in marble by one small and elegant"; a rather curious method of carving "à l'oreille de la lettre," as it may be termed. The statue is rather a cumbersome affair, the figure of Handel being *thick* and heavy, but it has the merit of being a fine likeness.

In the north transept are five of Roubiliac's monuments, among them one to Major-General Fleming (1750) and another to Lieut.-General Hargrave, which cannot be said to exhibit any very remarkable characteristics.

But a far more notable production than these was the monument to Sir Peter Warren (dated 1753), although it is by no means the best example we have of Roubiliac's skill. It depicts a Hercules placing the bust of the dead sailor on a pedestal, while a figure representing Navigation stands ready to crown its brows with a laurel wreath. Behind is shown the British flag forming a background; a cornucopia emptying itself, an anchor, and a cannon being subsidiary points in the design. The whole will seem to our modern ideas allegorically overloaded, but if you examine the beautifully conceived and executed figure of Navigation (a lovely piece of work) by itself, or the Hercules, whose arms were, we are told, modelled from those of a waterman, you will hardly fail to realise the excellence of these, the chief features of the work.

In the monument to Field-Marshal Wade (1748), which is not far off, there is the same traditional desire to impress allegory into the service of art. Roubiliac, I imagine, realised that when a commission for such a work was given him, he was expected to produce these overloaded tributes to the dead; indeed he may have been, and probably was, specifically desired to do so; and what he could do to distinguish them from others by less notable sculptors, was to give to the figures grace and dignity, and to envelop the whole in the cloak of his exquisite workmanship; and so we have here Time attempting to overthrow the military trophies of the dead warrior, while Fame frustrates his endeavour; a curiously unhappy prognostication, as Wade's fame is little remembered to-day.

But the best known of Roubiliac's monuments in the Abbey, and certainly his finest achievement there, is that to Lady Elizabeth Nightingale (1761), which was so greatly admired by Burke. "Those who are not pleased with the natural pathos of one part," says Cunningham, "are captivated by the allegorical extravagance of another; and persons who care for none of these matters, find enough to admire in the difficult workmanship of the marble skeleton." Mrs. Nightingale (she was of the noble house of Ferrers) is shown lying on a couch, on the point of expiring, and beneath this couch, a half-opened door gives egress to Death, in the form of a skeleton, who aims a dart at his victim; while the husband in an access of despair, interposes his arm to ward off the blow. The idea was not improbably borrowed by Roubiliac from René Michel Slodtz's somewhat similar production in the Church of St. Sulpice, at Paris, executed in 1750, although, as has been pointed out, there was no reason why he should have done so, as the idea itself is old enough, although its application in this way seems certainly to have been hitherto confined to Slodtz. As, too, there is no record of Roubiliac having visited Paris at this time,* and in those days

* The date of the lady's death, on the monument, is 1734, but it took place in 1731.

MONUMENT TO LADY ELIZABETH NIGHTINGALE
By Roubiliac

such an excursion was one which, had it occurred, would have been recorded, it does not seem that the sculptor could, in any case, have actually examined Slodtz's work.

While engaged in superintending the erection of the Nightingale monument, Roubiliac was one day found by Gayfere, the Abbey mason, who used to relate the circumstance, standing spell-bound and in an ecstasy of admiration before one of the splendid figures which support the canopy over the recumbent figure of Sir Francis Vere; as the mason approached Roubiliac laid his restraining hand on his arm and, pointing to the statue, exclaimed, "Hush! he will speak soon." This was characteristic of the sculptor, whose eyes would roll in a fine frenzy at the sight of some unusually lifelike piece of work. In a lesser man such characteristics might be regarded as rather theatrical and studied, but I think there is little doubt that in this case the excitable temperament of the man and his passion of admiration for good work in others, really led him into remarks and attitudes which more sober critics may regard as extravagances.

In other parts of the country examples of Roubiliac's work are to be met with; thus at Boughton, in Northamptonshire, are two of his most ambitious monuments: those to the Duke and Duchess of Montagu.* These works are very splendid; indeed, as Cunningham remarks, the sculptor "has not spared anything but original thought in their composition." For such important personages Roubiliac evidently imagined that mere grace and simplicity would be insufficient in their monuments, and so he produced magnificent and elaborate designs which have all the force of official works, and appeal to us as little as this class of achievement usually does. The actual carving is excellent, almost faultless, but the designs are tame and uninspired, and might easily be those of a third- or fourth-rate sculptor executed by a master.

* There is a monument by Roubiliac to Lord Shannon in Walton Church; and one to the Lynn family in Southwick Church, for which he received £500.

As I have said, it was in single figures, where he could give life and variety to his work and was not tied down by those conventions which still survived in sepulchral monuments in which allegorical trophies and figures were expected to be very much *en évidence*, that Roubiliac was most successful, and one of the best examples of his skill in this direction is the statue of Duncan Forbes, President of the College of Justice, in Edinburgh. The expression of sagacity and earnest attention on the part of the judge is finely portrayed, and there is an animation about the figure which, if not wholly appropriate to the calm, judicial air expected in an administrator of the laws, is yet a proof of the sculptor's ability to endow his work with vivacity and life. The statue is carved from a hard bluish-tinged marble, and the surface is highly polished, which helps to preserve the material from stain, and gives an added softness and flexibility to the fall of the robes.

Another of Roubiliac's statues was that of George I., carved for the Senate House, at Cambridge, which Walpole describes as "well executed," and another, that of Charles, Duke of Somerset, the "proud Duke," as he was called, Chancellor of Cambridge University, which was also placed in the Senate House. Concerning these two statues, Cunningham once received the following judgment, from one whom he calls "a sculptor of genius and taste," and whom I suppose to have been Chantrey:

"A man who was not told they were by Roubiliac might look at them once, but never think of them again; but when informed from whose hands they came, he would look for beauties and find few: careful workmanship and desire of effect distinguish them in common with all that sculptor's works—yet, as I have said, they are not striking performances, and one may pass by them without suffering a just reproach of want of taste."

Cunningham, in quoting this, adds that it is, perhaps, too severe a judgment. If it be, and it *was* enunciated by Chantrey, the sculptor's praise of another of Roubiliac's performances, more than makes up for it, for speaking

of the statue of Sir Isaac Newton, he says: "The Sir Isaac Newton is the noblest, I think, of all our English statues. There is an air of nature, and a loftiness of thought about it, which no other artist has in this country, I suspect, reached. You cannot imagine anything grander in sentiment, and the execution is every way worthy of it."

"The simplicity of the figure," says Jones in his "Life of Chantrey," "united with the apparent intelligence and thought in the countenance, he (Chantrey) considered as quite satisfactory; and although he generally disliked the imitation of any particular material in drapery, he was reconciled to the College dress of the philosopher. From its perfect arrangement, the imitation is so complete that the person who shows the statue at Cambridge always informs the visitors that it only requires to be black to render it a deception."

Chantrey, however, could not tolerate the ornaments on Roubiliac's monument to Lord Shannon, in Walton Church, which he thought derogated from the dignity and simplicity of good sculpture; on the other hand, the beadle of Worcester Cathedral used to tell how, whenever the sculptor was in that city, he made a point of visiting Roubiliac's monument to Bishop Hurd, and was accustomed to spend a considerable time in studying it, so remarkable seemed to him his predecessor's power over his material.

The splendid statue of Newton was executed for Trinity College, Cambridge, where it may still be seen in its serene and dignified composure, a magnificent tribute to the extraordinary genius who is here so vividly portrayed.*

This is probably Roubiliac's finest work in this direction, but his statue of Shakespeare may be said to be his most famous. This was a commission from David Garrick, in 1758, and was originally placed in the garden of the actor's house at Hampton, being afterwards removed, according to the terms of his bequest, to the

* Roubiliac also executed the monument to Henry Chichele, founder of All Souls', Oxford, in 1751.

British Museum. Fault has been found with the work because it represents the Bard rather too obviously in a state of inspiration, depicting him, with his dress in most admired disorder, in the throes of composition. But, one asks, how better could he be represented? Roubiliac attempted too much, perhaps, in trying to catch the illusive expression of genius, but to have attempted it shows that he recognised, as we know his temperament was just the one to sympathise with, the splendid imaginings of that mysterious entity whom we know as Shakespeare. That Roubiliac himself regarded it as, in a sense, his masterpiece may be assumed from the fact that in Adrien Carpentière's * portrait he is shown putting the final touches to the model, and as he fixes the expression of the eye with his modelling tool, his own eyes seem to be lighted up with sympathetic excitement.

For this fine work the sum agreed upon between Roubiliac and Garrick was the not extravagant one of three hundred guineas; and it is said that the actor during the early stages of the work, visiting the sculptor's studio, suggested to the latter the pose, and placing himself in position, exclaimed, "Behold the poet of Avon!" which if not true was quite likely to have been. It appears that the marble for the work was faintly marked with veins; it was as good as Roubiliac could afford at the price he was to receive, but one day Garrick, entering the studio and seeing this disfigurement on the face of his hero, exclaimed, "What! was Shakespeare marked with mulberries?" Whereupon Roubiliac cut off the head and replaced it by one in the purest marble obtainable.

One suspects that this commission was not altogether a profitable or pleasurable one, for Garrick was a fidgety fellow, and was always dropping into the studio, and

* Carpentière was a sculptor much employed by the Duke of Chandos, at Canons, and was for a time chief assistant to Van Ost, or Nost, who executed the statue of George I., once at Canons and afterwards in Leicester Square. Carpentière kept a leaden statue manufactory in Piccadilly, and died in 1737, when he was between sixty and seventy years of age (Walpole).

his, "How's Shakespeare, eh? I shall go and pay my respects to him," was generally the prelude to some criticism which, if not always judicious, at least meant more work for the ill-paid Roubiliac. When therefore he put the date (1758) of its completion on the pedestal of the statue, one imagines he was not sorry to say good-bye to the work, and still more to his hypercritical patron.*

Of Roubiliac's busts should first be mentioned those at Trinity College, Cambridge, representing Newton, Ray, Willoughby, &c., because no less an authority than Chantrey thus speaks of them: "Those busts impressed me at once with veneration for the genius of the artist. I know of no works of that kind which may be safely compared to them. They have a manly air and vigorous freedom of manner, which proves to me that he treated them rather in the manner of the heads of statues than as domestic portraits, where fidelity of resemblance is more aimed at. Those who have not seen the Cambridge busts, and above all the statue of Newton, are strangers to the best work of Roubiliac."

Another set of busts were those which the sculptor executed to the order of Frederick, Prince of Wales, who gave them to Pope in 1739. They represent Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden. Pope bequeathed them to Lord Lyttelton, at whose seat, Hagley, they were placed. Among other work in this direction, may be named a bust of Pope,† executed for Bolingbroke, in 1741, and subsequently in the famous Watson-Taylor Collection; one of Sir Robert Walpole, at Houghton; that of Dr. Frewen (1757), in the Library of Christ Church, Oxford; and a plaster model of the head of Mr. Coke of Holkham, which may be seen, reproduced in marble by Chantrey, in the gallery at Holkham.

In the British Museum are a series of terra-cotta

* Among other statues Roubiliac executed is a not very well known one of Charles I. for George Augustus Selwyn, at Matson, signed and dated 1759. See *Gentleman's Magazine* for May, 1788.

† The model for this once belonged to Rogers, the poet, at whose sale the late John Murray purchased it.

models and casts by Roubiliac, presented, soon after the sculptor's death, by Dr. Maty. They include, besides copies from the antique, models for the busts of Milton, Shakespeare, Cromwell, Dr. Mead, Martin Folkes (the original is at Wilton), Lord Chesterfield, Bentley, Prior,* Ray, and Willoughby; many of the completed marbles being at Trinity College, Cambridge.

Among other busts by Roubiliac may be mentioned those of Bishops Hurd and Hough (1744), in Worcester Cathedral; of Hogarth, in the National Portrait Gallery; of Wilton, at the Royal Academy; of Garrick, at the Garrick Club; of Isaac Ware, the architect; and of George I. and Handel, in the Royal Collection.†

Roubiliac, who had all his life been an industrious worker, was accustomed to labour in his studio late into the night, after his workmen had left; and this habit, unfortunately necessary, as he had by no means received emoluments consonant with the extent and variety of his undertakings, is said to have hastened his death, which took place, in St. Martin's Lane, on January 11, 1762. He was buried in the churchyard of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields four days later, the ceremony being attended by, amongst many others, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Hogarth.

Ten years before his decease he had married a Miss Crosby, of Deptford (January 1752), whom the *Covent Garden Journal* for that month described as "a celebrated Beauty with a Fortune of Ten Thousand Pounds." Where, however, this money went to is a mystery, for Roubiliac died in debt, although he appears to have lived quietly and frugally, spending much of his time at those taverns, which then took the place in a man's daily life that clubs do to-day, where he was accustomed to meet congenial artistic spirits, happy in cracking

* Subsequently at Stowe, at the sale of which it was purchased by Sir Robert Peel for £137 10*s*.

† Where possible Roubiliac dispensed with wigs on his busts. He greatly disliked these ornaments, and only when, as in the case of the Cass monument in St. Botolph's Church, he was absolutely obliged, would he consent to add them.

the bottle and in indulging in his favourite game of whist.*

A few anecdotes have survived, all of which show Roubiliac to have possessed an amiable character, and to have been devoted to his art. As an exemplification of the latter characteristic, it is told that if he happened to be in the company of a lady who possessed a well-turned ear, or a small and prettily formed hand, he would gaze intently upon her, and suddenly exclaim: "Madam, I must have your hand," or "Madam, I will have your ear," as the case might be, much to the confusion of strangers who were not always prepared for such Gallic spontaneities.

Smith, in his "Life of Nollekens," tells this story as illustrating Roubiliac's constant thought of the particular work he might have in hand :

"My father," says he, "related the following anecdote of Roubiliac, who generally was so studiously wrapt up and absorbed in his art as to lose all individual recollection whatever of person and place unconnected with the subject immediately on his mind. One day at dinner, during the time he was so intently engaged in modelling the figure of Mr. Nightingale warding off the dart of death from his wife, he suddenly dropt his knife and fork on his plate, fell back in his chair, and then in an instant darted forward and threw his features into the strongest possible expression of fear ; at the same moment fixing his piercing eye so expressively on the country lad who waited at table, that he was greatly astonished."

Another story shows his absence of mind in a different direction. On one occasion having invited a friend to stay the night with him, after an evening at the tavern, he took him home, led him to his room, and left him. The friend, ready for sleep, threw off his clothes and jumped into bed, when he found himself

* In the October of the year in which he was married he went with Hudson and Arthur Pond to Italy, where he met Reynolds, then returning home from the South. He subsequently told Reynolds that all he (Roubiliac) had done seemed meagre and starved and "as if made of nothing but tobacco pipes" in comparison with Bernini's work.

beside a dead body. Rushing to the door he shouted out for his host, who came hurrying up with, "*Mon Dieu!* what is the matter?" "The matter!" replied his affrighted friend, "look there!" and pointed to the corpse lying on the now opened bed. "Oh dear! oh dear!" exclaimed Roubiliac, "it is poor Mary, my housemaid. She died yesterday, and they have laid her out here. Poor Mary! oh dear me! Come, I shall find you another bed."

On one occasion Roubiliac paid a visit to Johnson, in Gough Square, in company with Reynolds, in order to ask the Doctor to write an epitaph for one of his monuments. Arrived in the great man's garret, the sculptor began a high-flown harangue indicative of the honour he was soliciting, whereupon Johnson cut him short with, "Come, come, sir, let us have no more of this bombastic, ridiculous rhodomontade. Let me know, in simple language, the name, character, and quality of the person whose epitaph you intend to have me to write."

Another anecdote seems to show Roubiliac in a less amiable light than usual, but as he himself liked to put in "all the warts" in his busts, I give it as indicating that even so generally amenable a man had, occasionally, his rougher side. Dr. Anthony Askew, the friend of Hogarth, Mead, Dr. Parr, Sir William Jones, &c., commissioned the sculptor to execute a head of Dr. Mead, which he intended for presentation to the College of Physicians. The price agreed upon for this was £50, but when Askew received the bust he was so pleased with it that he sent the sculptor a further £50. It is said, however, that Roubiliac, considering himself still underpaid, sent in an account for £108 2*s*., which Askew indignantly paid.

Lord Chesterfield once said that Roubiliac was a sculptor, and his rivals merely stone-cutters; and there is a great deal of truth in the remark, for there is little doubt that, although such men as Rysbrack and Scheemakers were among the former, Roubiliac was so far beyond even them that he may properly be regarded as on a different and higher plane. Flaxman, who was

not uniformly friendly in his criticisms, and who certainly did not see eye to eye with the older man in his conception of what sculpture should be, has left us the following judgment concerning him, although Flaxman can hardly be regarded as a safe judge of a man whose methods and aspirations differed so widely from his own :

"Roubiliac was an enthusiast in his art," he says, "possessed of considerable talent : he copied vulgar nature with zeal, and some of his figures seem alive ; but their characters are mean, their expressions grimace, and their forms frequently bad ; his draperies are worked with great diligence and labour from the most disagreeable examples in nature, the folds being either heavy or meagre, frequently without a determined general form, and hung on his figures with little meaning. He grouped two figures together, for he never attempted more, better than most of his contemporaries ; but his thoughts are conceits, and his compositions epigrams."

The remark about Roubiliac's management of draperies makes the following words of Smith of interest here : "He seldom," says the writer, "modelled his drapery for his monumental figures, but carved it from the linen itself, which he dipped into warm starch-water, so that when he had pleased himself he left it to cool and dry, and then proceeded with the marble ; this my father assured me he did with all the drapery on Nightingale's monument." We may regard this as an authentic description of the sculptor's methods, as its narrator, Nathaniel Smith, father of the better-known John Thomas Smith, had become a pupil of Roubiliac in August 1755, and remained with the sculptor till his death, seven years later. He and Nicholas Read* are the only pupils whose names have been specifically mentioned ; Roubiliac cannot therefore, as was the case with Scheemakers, claim the honour of educating such a famous *élève* as Nollekens.†

* He produced a monument to Sir L. Robinson of considerable merit.

† Smith records that "Roubiliac, when he had to mend a broken antique, would mix grated Gloucester cheese with his plaster, adding the grounds of porter ; which mixture, when dry, forms a very hard cement."

Apart from his sculpture, Roubiliac is said to have possessed a knowledge and love of poetry to a no inconsiderable extent; he even on occasion made excursions himself into verse; but there are few people who have not done as much, and the specimen quoted by Dallaway, as a favourable example of the sculptor's facility in this direction, is not sufficiently remarkable to require re-quotation.

Roubiliac once, at least, made an attempt at oil painting, and in the sale of his effects, this effort, a portrait of himself, was sold for *3s. 6d.*! having apparently been purchased by a Mr. Scott, of Crown Court, Westminster.

JOSEPH WILTON

CHAPTER VI

JOSEPH WILTON

If to have been one of the founders of the Royal Academy, to have enjoyed the friendship of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Dr. Johnson, to have designed the royal state coach, and to have achieved wealth, and distinction as a host, entitle a man to be considered famous, then Joseph Wilton, who was and did all these things, may be so regarded ; but as a sculptor, I fear, he cannot be credited with such an apotheosis. Not that I would go so far as to say that he was wholly undeserving of praise and that he was entirely destitute of merit in this respect, for this would be to err on the other side ; but he was one of those men who achieve success rather through fortuitous circumstances than from the force of genius ; who, with really little original talent, have the art of making the best of what gifts they possess ; one of those, in short, who are apparently the delight of officialdom, and the despair of the true artist.

But if Wilton cannot be considered among the most eminent of British sculptors, he holds an undisputed position in the art, for reasons other than those of native ability. In the first place he was the earliest to receive that systematic course of training which has since been considered necessary for a regular and complete mastery of the art of sculpture ; and he was certainly the first to throw off the incubus of architectural restraint and domination which had hitherto fettered the freedom of his precursors, at a time when the majority of sculptors took their orders from architects and could hardly call their souls their own if they did not abide by the injunctions of their taskmasters. Cunningham has put the matter well when he describes how "The architects

succeeded in maintaining their authority over the swarms of foreign sculptors, whom want of subsistence allured to the British market, and dictated monuments something in the mathematical principles of their profession. . . . In truth, the architects of those days were mighty men. Not contented with planning the houses in which the nobles lived, they laid out the gardens in which they walked . . . and following them to the family vault, erected a triumphant monument in honour of their virtues." Wilton was practically the first to throw off this tyranny, for even successful men like Rysbrack and Roubiliac had succumbed to the tradition. Acquired wealth and a fortune left him by a successful father, combined with a spirit of proper independence, enabled him to take this step. By it he undoubtedly raised the status of the sculptor to a height to which it had, *per se*, never before attained, and his importance in the history of this branch of art is therefore obvious enough, even if, as was the case, his own contributions towards sculpture were for the most part uninspired and rather nugatory.

Joseph Wilton was the son of a man who, beginning his career as a common plasterer, became by a combination of shrewdness and untiring industry the head of a considerable manufactory where ornaments for ceilings and other architectural embellishments to houses, and furniture made of papier-maché, were turned out. In his workshops in Hedge Lane, Charing Cross, and in Edward Street, Cavendish Square, which premises Joseph inherited from him and subsequently occupied, he employed hundreds of men in his business; with the result that he accumulated a considerable fortune, which he left to his son, and was enabled to give that son a thorough and extensive grounding in the art he had elected to follow.

Wilton the younger was born in London on July 16, 1722. At first he received his education at Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, the intention of his father being to make a civil engineer of him. But the boy seems to have had no leaning towards such a profession, although when he first began to show that predilection for sculpture which

we are assured he exhibited, is not known. However, he did so, and so markedly that in due course, his father placed him with the Laurent Delvaux whom we have before met with as assistant to Scheemakers, and who had been a pupil of Francis Bird, so that the sculptural succession was here curiously complete. Delvaux's studio was at the town of Nivelles, in Brabant, and hither young Wilton came to study, being brought by his father, for whom it is suggested as probable that Delvaux had worked when in this country, a circumstance which would account for the choice of him as a master for Joseph. We have no record of what progress young Wilton made under Delvaux's hands, nor do we know the length of his apprenticeship, but in 1744, being then in his twenty-second year, he left his master and proceeded to Paris, where he entered the Academy and studied under the great Pigalle for the space of three years. During this period Wilton succeeded in gaining a silver medal at the Académie des Beaux-Arts, and also "acquired the power of cutting marble," an art hitherto unknown to the sculptors of this country.

In 1747 he set out for Italy, where he remained for eight years, first residing at Rome, and then proceeding to Florence, where he spent four years, at the same time making various journeys to inspect the relics of antiquity scattered about in other centres of that country.

During the period Wilton spent in Italy, two circumstances occurred of vital importance to his after-career. One of these was his gaining the Jubilee Gold Medal offered by the Roman Academy, which was presented to the young artist by the Pope—Benedict XIV.; the other the acquisition of the patronage of an English gentleman who had been attracted by his work in Rome—a Mr. Locke of Norbury Park. Although we have no record as to how Wilton was affected by the sight of the treasures of antiquity around him, or of those still earlier ones which the excavations at Herculaneum and Pæstum and elsewhere then going on, largely under the *ægis* of the Society of Dilettanti, were exhibiting to the gaze of the artistic and the curious,

yet we know that he employed much of his time in making copies of antiquities—statues, busts, &c.—in marble, which he was able to dispose of to the numerous Englishmen who visited Rome at this period, as a part of the Grand Tour, and who regarded it as almost necessary that they should take back to their own country some classic memento of the Holy City. Thus for eight years Wilton worked at his art and absorbed an invaluable amount of information which, if it never resulted in his rising above a respectable mediocrity, was, at least, not the fault of his models or his want of industry. In 1755 he left Italy in the company of Chambers the architect, Cipriani the engraver, and a sculptor named Capizzoldi, who was anxious to try his fortune in England.*

The moment for Wilton's return was particularly propitious. Just then the Duke of Richmond, a lover and patron of sculpture, had determined to open a gallery in Whitehall where students might study the collection of copies from the antique which he had assembled there, and work away to their hearts' content, without any expense to themselves, and a chance of obtaining one or more of the premiums which the Duke promised to pay to the most successful. Such an institution obviously required technical supervision, and Wilton and Cipriani were chosen to control it. Unfortunately for these artists as well as for those who hoped to benefit by the Duke's liberality, the duration of this "Statue Garden," as it was called, was not destined to be a long one. The Duke of Richmond was called away to join his regiment on active service abroad, and in the haste of departure, overlooked the payment of some premiums which had become due, whereupon one of the irresponsible students, annoyed, or affecting to be, at the oversight, fixed a lampoon on the door of the

* He to some extent succeeded, although his beginnings were small, as may be supposed when we know that in the attic he hired in Warwick Street he had perforce, in the absence of all but indispensable furniture, to paint on the walls a semblance of sofas and chairs and curtains, &c. (Smith). He worked for a time for Wilton, but subsequently returned to Italy.

gallery itself, where all the world might read an intimation purporting to come direct from the Duke, and apparently signed by himself, wherein he apologised for his poverty, and expressed sorrow for having promised premiums which he was not rich enough to pay. The Duke returned and found the offending notice still up. Annoyed beyond measure at such an unseemly return for his kindness, he shut up the gallery and denuded it of its contents. The premiums were, of course, duly paid; but for long the patron's resentment was such that he would have nothing further to do with art students, and when, many years after, he did reopen his gallery, he placed it under the direction of the Society of Arts.

It was in 1758 that Wilton had been made a director of the Richmond Gallery, and two years later, he was to receive another, and more permanent, appointment; this was the office of State Coach Carver to the king, which was conferred upon him at the accession of George III. This appointment seems to have been anything but an empty honour, for Wilton was soon engaged on that Coronation State Coach which many generations since have seen and wondered at, and of which Cipriani painted the panels. Nowadays the selection of one who set up as a sculptor for such a work would be regarded as ridiculous, but then it was in no way thought to be an anomaly, and Wilton's workshops, situated where Foley Place is now, were soon busy in supplying the vehicular wants of the new monarch. Hand in hand with these labours, which after all must have been largely carried out by Wilton's workmen, the sculptor was slowly but surely taking his place, a foremost one, among those who carved statues and busts—to call them British sculptors would be to do them too much honour—and, as Cunningham says, "ere long he began to be congratulated as the first great restorer of freedom to British sculpture."

There is no doubt that Wilton, notwithstanding his limitations—limitations rather perhaps due to the period in which he found himself than to his own want of restraint and perception—did no little towards the

advancement of British sculpture. He was a cultivated man, endowed with a far wider range of knowledge than the majority of his predecessors or contemporaries; his acquaintance with anatomy, on which he prided himself, was considerable; his studies of the antique had resulted in his studiously avoiding that flamboyant manner that had gained in the earlier years of the century, and was still receiving, acceptance; he aimed at, and succeeded in attaining, a calm and restrained method which gives a dignity to his achievement, and where that achievement is disfigured by inappropriate accessories, we must rather blame the taste of the period than the instincts of the artist. Like many a better sculptor—Roubiliac, quite a different craftsman as he was, was, to a certain extent, one—he failed in composition and grouping, but many of his single figures and his busts have undoubted merit, if only because they aimed at introducing a simple and more classic style into the sculpture of this country.

One of the first of Wilton's works was his colossal monument to General Wolfe, in Westminster Abbey, which was erected by the king and Parliament in 1772 at a cost of £3000. It is not a good example of what Wilton could do, nor is it worthy of much consideration, if any, as a work of art. It is heavy, crowded, and wants originality, although, on the other hand, it possesses many undoubted merits; for instance, the way in which the whole of the vast erection is made to focus on the head of the dying hero is very skilfully and admirably contrived, and is, therefore, particularly noticeable.

There is an excellent bronze bas-relief representing the toilsome march of the troops from the river-bank to the Heights of Abraham above, forming a portion of the work, and this was executed by the eccentric Capizzoldi, to whom I have before referred, and who is alone by it proved to have been a skilful and considerable artist.

A far better piece of work than the Wolfe monument was that which Wilton was commissioned to undertake to the memory of Admiral Holmes, in 1766. It represents the seaman dressed as a Roman citizen and resting his hand on a cannon, over which hangs the national flag.

Apart from the question, so long debated, and with no little acrimony, as to the propriety of dressing the figure of a modern man in the garb of an ancient, this statue is a successful one; like all Wilton's work the actual execution leaves nothing to be desired, and as he was at his best in such heroic figures as that here represented, the work may be regarded as a characteristic and notable example of his output at its best. Cunningham, who, by-the-bye, seems curiously biased against Wilton, says of it, "The workmanship is respectable, and as one eye is enough to make a man king among the blind, Wilton triumphed over his fellows."

What gives to Wilton a high place among sculptors is the fact that his knowledge of anatomy was extensive and peculiar; he had studied the human form carefully during those novitiate years in Rome, and although he can never exactly be said to have caught the spirit of classicism, he at least learnt from it the great secret that even a clothed figure can only be properly produced by an intimate knowledge of the bones and muscles that are hidden beneath flowing drapery. To some extent this is embodied in his next considerable achievement, the monument to the Earl and Countess of Montrath. This is a large and somewhat pretentious affair, and its immense proportions and innumerable adjuncts and trophies will appeal less to our saner ideas of what such things should be, than it did to the sculptor's contemporaries. That in the main it pleased them is evidenced by the remarks of a critic of the day, who thus speaks of it in a strain of hyperbole which can only be understood by a knowledge of what was then considered excellent and right. "The design," he says, "is truly grand, and the execution masterly. On the summit is the representation of the splendid mansions of the blessed, with cherubim and seraphim, and on a sarcophagus beneath are two principal figures—the one, an angel ascending on a cloud, the other, the Countess in the attitude of rising from the dead supported by an angel, who holds her up with his left hand, and with his right points to heaven, where a seat is prepared for her, and where another angel is ready to

receive and crown her with a wreath of glory. There are beauties in this monument which exceed description —the pleasure in the countenance of the receiving angel is inimitable, and the fine feathering of the wings has a lightness which nature only can surpass."

There was rather a tendency, in those days, to praise or blame in extremes, especially in the case of contemporary work, and the last sentence quoted above is a good example of how work which was not in itself of the highest excellence, was apt to be consigned to a lower plane than it merited by later judges, because of the extravagant eulogy of those who had preceded them.

Wilton was never better pleased than when he was able to introduce angels into his compositions, and since, as a critic of our own days has confessed, he was wont to support them on wings designed with ease, felicity, and a novelty which at once surprised and delighted, it is probable that in this monument (which I can only speak of from hearsay) the presence of such adjuncts treated in this way was largely responsible for the enthusiasm of the criticism I have just quoted.

In 1767 Wilton was engaged, among much other work, on his sepulchral monument to Pulteney, Earl of Bath (now in Westminster Abbey), a composition in which his knowledge of anatomy had full play, and which was as cleverly executed, so far as the carving and finishing were concerned, as anything he ever did. To about the same time, also, must I think be dated his monument to Stephen Hales, the philosopher and divine, also in the Abbey. Two principal figures, one depicting Religion, the other Botany, flank the tomb. Hales's medallion portrait is held by the latter, while at the feet of the figure appears a globe on which the winds are supposed to blow, an allusion to Hales's invention of ventilation. The difficulty of telling this in marble is so obvious that we may for once agree with Cunningham in considering that Wilton was, here at least, attempting what sculpture could not perform; and in this work the sculptor, no doubt, gave his detractors an opening for asserting that he never knew the limits of his art.

To this work may be added the sculptor's statue of George III.* dressed as a Roman, in the Royal Exchange, and a monument to the Cremorne family, in Ireland, which has been regarded as the most masterly of his productions. So much for his more ambitious undertakings. If their small number is apt to create some surprise, considering that Wilton was for a time so industrious a workman, it must be remembered that much of his industry was directed into other channels: thus he executed a number of busts of eminent men, many of which exhibit a freedom of handling and an almost classic sense of restraint which was not always observable in his larger works. The memory of Bacon and Cromwell, Chatham and Chesterfield, Newton and Swift and Wolfe was thus perpetuated by Wilton. The Chesterfield bust is in the British Museum; the rest are scattered about; but on Wilton's own showing, we know that he copied the Cromwell from the famous Florence mask, and criticism has agreed that it was a real and lifelike presentment, if exhibiting rather more ferocity than the Usurper ever showed, at least in his countenance. Wilton, working under a royal patron, may, however, have thought well to accentuate, purposely, in the face, what might, under such conditions, be regarded as characteristic of one who had taken a leading part in the judicial murder of a sovereign.

Another form of artistic industry which occupied much of Wilton's time was the copying of antique statues and busts, and the renovation of broken fragments as well as the *emendations*, as they may be called, which he made to incomplete relics of classic sculpture. In such varied work,† his knowledge of anatomy and his love for the antique stood him in good stead, and in this direction

* The statue of George III. in Berkeley Square was also erected under Wilton's direction. It was executed by Beaupré, and represented the monarch as Marcus Aurelius. It was set up in 1766 at the instance of the Princess Amelia, daughter of George II., and removed in 1827.

† He designed the monument to Sir Hans Sloane in the churchyard of Chelsea Church, near where he at one time lived, and two white marble urns in the church itself were executed by him in memory of two of his children.

his success was considerable, although it is on record that a torso which had been injured in a fire at the Duke of Richmond's house in Whitehall, and which the sculptor attempted to restore to its pristine beauty, was anything but a success. It is now in the British Museum, so that its merits as a *rifacimento* can be judged by those who are curious in the matter.

By these varied employments, combined with his emoluments as the Royal Coach Carver, and the considerable fortune left him by his father, Wilton had become a rich man; while his intimacy with many of his more notable contemporaries, Reynolds, Chambers, Cipriani, Baretti, Richard Wilson, and Johnson and his circle, to mention but these, made him a person of importance in his day. In 1768, he had been elected a member of the Royal Academy, of which he was later appointed Keeper and Librarian, a post he held till his death, in succession to Carlini, who had been raised to the dignity of an R.A. at the same time as his friend The accumulation of wealth and the enlargement of his friendships, seems to have had a rather deteriorating effect on Wilton's artistic energy, and from the carving of statues he passed complacently to the carving of joints and became famous for his dinners and his wine; in a word, he blossomed into a man of fashion, who indulged his taste by still occasionally giving evidence that he had once been an artist. Such was the influence of money on one who had given so much promise and had, for a time, followed it up by so much industry. But it was not only affluence that caused him to take the step of entirely retiring from the exercise of his art. Other men were gradually arising who threatened to supplant him in public favour, like Nollekens and Banks, and he may have recognised the propriety of not exceeding his "welcome while," and of quitting the artistic arena while his powers were still recognised and appreciated. Wilton may also have considered that to labour till the end of his days without tasting the pleasures of repose and enjoyment was both ill-advised and unnecessary. His family consisted of one daughter, whose beauty has been preserved by Reynolds,

and is said to have been one of the chief attractions which drew many people to her father's hospitable board. This daughter became the wife of Sir Robert Chambers, and Johnson, writing to Boswell, in 1774, remarks that "Chambers is either married or almost married to Miss Wilton, a girl of sixteen, exquisitely beautiful, whom he has with his lawyer's tongue persuaded to take her chance with him in the East."

This event probably marks the period when, from receiving occasional visitors and giving intermittent dinners, Wilton determined to live the life of a man of wealth and fashion and to entertain largely. He had a fine house, sumptuously furnished, his friends, besides his notable artistic contemporaries, included such men as Mr. Locke of Norbury Park, his earliest patron, Lord Charlemont, who had posed as a Mæcenas to Hogarth, and Joseph Baretti, who paid for his regular meals at Wilton's house by doses of the flattery which he knew his host appreciated, applied personally to him or more discreetly enclosed between the covers of his "Guide to the Royal Academy."

Smith indeed relates that he had frequently seen Baretti and Richard Wilson, another of Wilton's friends, walking under the large elms which at that time stood at the end of Union Street, waiting till their host's dinner hour should be announced by the clock of Portland Chapel. "I have," adds Smith, "the figures of these men still in my mind's eye. Baretti was of a middling stature, squabby, round-shouldered and short-sighted; and the landscape painter was rather tall, square-shouldered and well built; but with a nose which had increased to an enormous size. They both wore cocked hats and walked with canes."

Wilton subsequently disposed of his studio and other professional possessions by auction. An interesting account of the premises has been left us by Smith in his "Nollekens and his Times," which seems worth transcribing, because, as usual with Smith, the writer particularises the exact position of the place.

"I remember," he says, "one Sunday morning going

with my father and Mr. Nollekens to see the studio and workshop of the late Joseph Wilton, Esq., R.A., father of the present Lady Chambers and friend of Baretti. . . . Mr. Wilton's studio stood on the south side of Queen Anne Street East, now Foley Place, upon the site of five houses, Nos. 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26; in the house No. 27, at the corner of Portland Street, Mr. Wilton resided for many years. We viewed his works, and the model of King George III.'s state coach, a most beautiful little toy, exquisitely adorned with ornaments modelled in wax by Capizzoldi and Voyers, the panels being painted in water-colours by Cipriani. The designs consisted of figures and historical emblems, and Cipriani also painted the same subjects upon the coach itself." Smith must have felt a personal interest in viewing these things, for as a boy he had attracted the notice of Wilton, who, on the boy's evincing a desire to become an engraver, had furnished him with a letter of introduction to Bartolozzi.

Although Wilton gave up active service in the interests of sculpture, he continued to hold his appointment of Keeper of the Royal Academy, and as one of its members, is said to have taken a leading part in the impeachment and subsequent expulsion of James Barry, in which he was at one with most of his fellow members.

His death took place at his house in Queen Anne Street East on November 25, 1803, when he had reached the ripe age of eighty.

Cunningham describes his outward man as being tall, portly, and personable, and, what is better, tells us that he was a warm friend and an agreeable, courtly companion —a perfect gentleman in manners and at heart. He was fond of dress and was always arrayed in the height of fashion, his wig well powdered and his gold-headed cane carried with an air of distinction. Roubiliac once executed a bust of him, representing him with his sculptor's hammer in his hand; this records one, the earlier, side of his career; the other and later is perhaps better exhibited by the portrait which Mortimer painted of him, in which he is shown in the company of the artist,

and which may be regarded as a commentary on his good-fellowship and love of his kind.*

As a sculptor, although Wilton cannot be ranked among the highest, yet his claims have been rather unfairly dealt with. Indeed, betwixt the contending hyperbolic eulogies of his friends and the disproportioned abuse of his detractors, it is rather difficult to arrive at a sane judgment concerning his aims and achievements. If on the one hand he is said to have possessed little or no originality, to have wanted loftiness of idea and sentiment, and to have been seldom natural; on the other he may be regarded as representing the transition between the school of Roubiliac, and his master Pigalle, and that neo-Hellenic school which was gradually superseding their flamboyant but at the same time poetical ideas. He was better equipped than most men of his day in the *arcanæ* of his art; his training had been more systematic than that of nearly any sculptor before or since; his knowledge of anatomy was perfect, his technical execution irreproachable, while occasional gleams of inspiration and graceful thought show that he almost achieved the position of a great artist. Perhaps in a different age and under other conditions, he might actually have become one, although it is yet a question whether, under any circumstances, his easily pleased self-criticism and a certain enjoyment of life, rather alien to true genius, would ever have enabled him to rise to the greatest heights. That illusive quality which we, in want of a better word, call genius was not implanted in him; but after all genius is not everything, and it is probable that Wilton, wanting this inspiring quality, remained, if a lesser artist, a better and more lovable man.

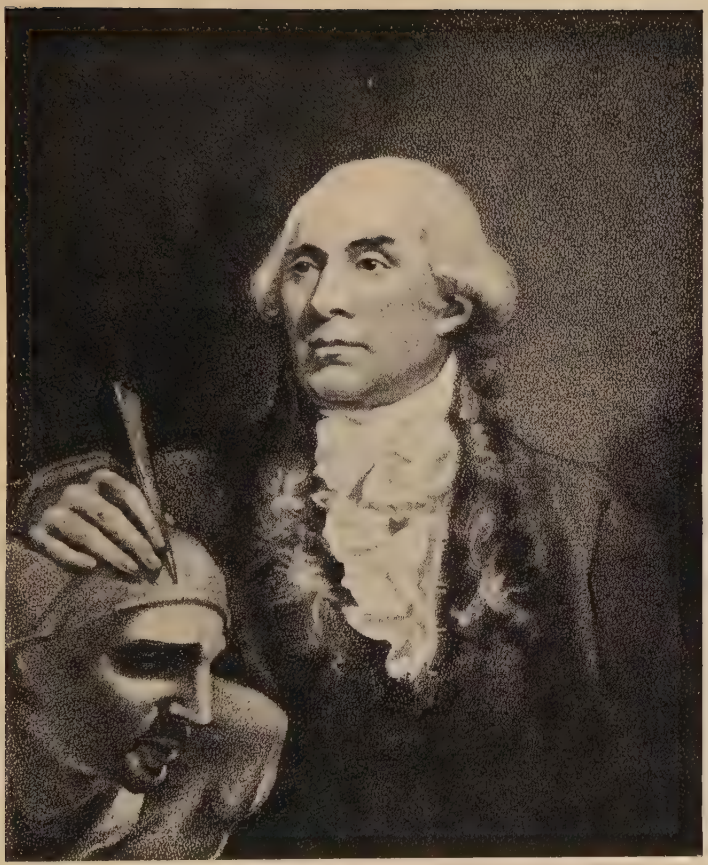
* The bust afterwards passed to Lady Chambers, who presented it to the Royal Academy; the portrait is now to be seen in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House.

CHAPTER VII

THOMAS BANKS

BEFORE the middle of the eighteenth century had been reached, three men were born who were destined to make great names for themselves in the *rôle* of British sculptors; they were Thomas Banks, Joseph Nollekens, and John Bacon, and all were so far contemporaneous that they came into the world within a period of five years: Banks being born in 1735, Nollekens two years later, and Bacon in 1740. Thus Banks had a slight priority, although he was not fated to achieve the success which attended the other two, and it will therefore be proper to speak first of him. Thomas Banks was the son of William Banks, who is described as a worthy and diligent man, and who for many years occupied the responsible position of land steward to the Duke of Beaufort, at Badminton. Thomas was, however, not born there, but in Lambeth, where he first saw the light on December 29, 1735. Nothing, not even the maiden name, is recorded of his mother, but she is known to have given birth to two other sons—one of whom, Charles, became like his brother a sculptor, although he never made any position for himself.

The elder Banks's affairs were sufficiently flourishing to enable him to give his children a sound education, although it has been conjectured that Thomas's subsequent love and knowledge of the classics was more likely to have been gained from translations than from any intimate or extensive acquaintance with the originals. The youth must have shown artistic tendencies, for although these were not then sufficient to cause his father to place him with a sculptor, they were pronounced enough to show that a training in some branch of art



THOMAS BANKS

would better suit his tastes and temperament than would a commercial career.

After having received the rudiments of ordinary education at Ross, in Herefordshire, young Banks studied for a time with one Barlow, an ornamental carver, and remained with him for seven years till he (Banks) was twenty-two years of age. At this moment William Kent was the god of London's artistic (if it may be dignified with such a word) idolatry. Kent had become successful by pandering to all tastes and by being a kind of jack-in-all-trades of art—artist, sculptor, architect, landscape-gardener, and what not—and the elder Banks, probably recognising the advisability of his son's having more than one string to his bow, placed him under the fashionable arbiter of taste. It is not improbable that Kent may have been summoned to Badminton in connection with the mansion or the gardens, and that William Banks thus came into contact with him; in any case Banks the younger was placed with him and proceeded to learn the elements of architecture and the then subsidiary art of carving the more decorative portions of buildings.

Although his later work in sculpture, pure and simple, can be far less traced to this early training than to his individual inspiration and love of the classics, yet in some of his bas-reliefs there are indications of his architectural novitiate in the management of perspective and a certain conception of form and arrangement. How long he remained with Kent is not known, but it is said that, on leaving his master's studio, he worked for a time at wood-carving, a profession then and for some time after (Chantrey and others followed it) more closely connected with sculpture than we now regard it. Indeed the fact that Grinling Gibbon is admitted into the ranks of sculptors, is alone sufficient to prove its former status, even if there should be any question about it now. A relic of these days was once preserved, and may possibly still be in existence, in a winged angel carved in wood for the top of a harp which Banks gave to his daughter; but this is the only specimen of

his skill in this direction which has been identified as his work.

But it was sculpture that attracted young Banks; and in this art he seems to have been practically his own master, for there is no record of his having received any instruction in any school (except that he is known to have studied "from the living model" at the St. Martin's Lane Academy in 1761), until the institution of the Royal Academy, when he became a student there, in 1769. But before this he had made so much progress in the art* that he had been awarded certain premiums by the Society of Arts, between the years 1763 and 1769. Although we do not know the nature of the subjects of the works he exhibited, it is interesting to find that for a *basso-relievo* in marble he gained twenty-five guineas; for a similar work in Portland stone thirty guineas; for another smaller one in marble, ten guineas; for a model in clay, twenty guineas; and for a design for ornamental furniture (Kent's influence and method of universal art provider seem evidenced here), twenty guineas.

On the opening of the Royal Academy, Banks at once became a student. Notwithstanding the fact that he was now thirty-three, had become a husband and a father, and had, as we have seen, acquired no little success, he was ready to join the band of younger, and, in many cases, wholly inexperienced men, who flocked to the new school. It is pleasant to find that he received instant recognition, and not only many of the Academicians but even the President—the great Sir Joshua himself—showed him marks of appreciation and unreservedly praised his models and his methods of producing them. Indeed he is said to have been the first of the students to gain the notice of Reynolds, who not long after affirmed that Banks was the first British sculptor to execute works instinct with classic grace, and that "his mind was ever dwelling on subjects worthy

* It is said that Banks's first master, Barlow, lived near Scheemakers, and that after working all day with the former, Banks was accustomed to spend his evenings studying in the studio of the latter.

of an ancient Greek"; words which, even if they protested a little too much, had yet sufficient truth in them to show that Sir Joshua was able to appreciate that particular quality in Banks which differentiated him then from his predecessors in the art of sculpture. Remembering Reynolds's devout worship of Michael Angelo, one can quite understand his rapturous recognition of one who, if not as fervent an admirer as himself of the great Italian, was yet imbued with the restrained and poetic conceptions of ancient art, to a remarkable degree.

Nor was the Academy's reward to the sculptor confined to the verbal praises of its head, or the appreciative remarks of its members. In 1770 it conferred on Banks its Gold Medal, the highest reward it had to bestow, and one which he gained in competition with a large number of aspirants for the coveted prize. This honour did much to make the sculptor's name known beyond the artistic circle in which it had already been recognised; while one or two other works which he completed, and exhibited on the Royal Academy walls about this time, still further helped to spread abroad his reputation. Two of these designs had for their subject Æneas rescuing Anchises from the burning walls of Troy; but they differed in their treatment of the subject, a circumstance which helps to show that lack of inventive power was not one of Banks's shortcomings. During the next year, he showed a piece of sculpture depicting a cherub hanging a garland on an urn, and a bust of an old man, taken from one of the professional models attached to the Royal Academy; both of which met with success; although, in the former especially, no marked originality was exhibited. But it was his group of Mercury, Argus, and Io, which met with the greatest success; indeed so highly did the Council of the Royal Academy think of this work that its members unanimously voted to Banks the Travelling Scholarship in their gift, which enabled its recipient to spend three years in Rome at the Academy's charges.

It can be imagined with what delight a man of Banks's temperament, full of love for the classics and possessing

no inconsiderable knowledge of them, would hail such a chance of visiting the city crowded with the unrivalled remains of ancient art, and so full of splendid memories, as Rome, and Banks lost no time in putting his affairs in order and setting out for Italy. His wife determined to accompany him; and disposing of the small house and studio which he had been for some time occupying in Bird Street, Oxford Street, or as it was then called the Oxford Road, which studio seems to have been taken on by his brother Charles, he set out, with Reynolds's advice in his ears: never to lose an opportunity of studying in the Sistine Chapel, and with the more official recommendation from the R.A. Council, to note and absorb all that was best in ancient and modern art in Rome.

Although the amount allowed towards his expenses was but £50 a year, Banks had been able to earn money before his departure, added to which his father had always been liberal with him, and his wife, a member of the Wooton family, was a co-heiress to much property—fields and gardens now covered by parts of Mayfair—and had brought a considerable dowry to her husband. Thus Banks, who had never known want, was well provided for in his first visit to a foreign land, and possessed this undoubted advantage: that he could see, in reason, everything he wished to without having to count the cost, and could prosecute his art without the enervating and often paralysing necessity of having to keep an eye on his bank-book.

Armed with letters of introduction and carrying with him many of his sketches, which, as we shall see, formed some of the most notable portions of his life's output, he and his wife arrived in Rome in the August of 1772. Here his life was divided between working diligently, which he began to do almost immediately on his arrival, seeing and studying the wonders of art around him, and making acquaintances among the numerous band of English artists and patrons who, at this period, swarmed in the capital. As is well known the impetus given to the searching out of antiquities

by the Society of Dilettanti was bearing splendid fruit; excavations were taking place on all sides, and from all sources the unconsidered (unconsidered by the Italians, that is) treasures of antiquity were being packed up and sent over to this country. One of the foremost in the search for such things was Gavin Hamilton, the Scotch painter, who had *carte-blanche* from Lord Lansdowne to acquire such statues and fragments as he might consider worthy of being placed in Lansdowne House, and it was due to him that the wonderful assemblage of antiquities now to be seen in that mansion, was got together. Hamilton soon extended his friendship to Banks, as he had done to Reynolds, Fuseli, Nollekens, and so many others. Another man, soon to become famous, whom the young sculptor had a chance of meeting, was Romney; while the great collector Townley was present, pursuing his indefatigable quest after his beloved fragments, and Capizzoldi, whom we have met with in connection with Wilton, and to whom Banks had brought a letter of introduction from Carlini, was here to give the sculptor instructions in that art of cutting marble, over which Banks had not yet attained much mastery. Indeed we find Banks writing to Smith, from whom he also had a letter of introduction, in these words: "Your good friend, Capizzoldi, has been truly kind to me; he has improved me much by the instructions he has given me in cutting the marble, in which the Italians beat us hollow."

Another letter from the sculptor, dated July 31, 1773, helps us to reconstruct, to some extent, the society he was now mixing in:

"Among the students in painting," he writes, "Fuseli cuts the greatest figure: last season he had pictures bespoke to the amount of thirteen hundred pounds, good encouragement for a student, yet nothing more than from his great abilities he is justly entitled to. Little Wickstead has had most of the portraits to paint here last season, owing to the endeavours of Messrs. Norton and Byres to carry every gentleman they could get hold of to see him: but Barron arriving, and having

great merit in the portrait way, and a good correspondence with the gentlemen, got so many portraits to paint as proved no small mortification to the aforesaid gentleman as well as his helpers. Barron is a young man of very conspicuous merit—has the most of Sir Joshua's fine manner of any of his pupils, and it is beyond a doubt that when he returns to England he will cut a great figure in his way" ; which last remark shows the fallacy of hasty prognostication, for who remembers Barron or his work now ?

This extract is also interesting as showing the commercial side of the art even in Rome, and how an artist's success largely depended not so much on his merit as on the assiduity with which the commercial travellers of art, as it were, canvassed his qualities. Luckily for himself Banks did not require such adventitious aids, and if he did not in consequence receive numerous commissions, he could afford to ignore this, and was able to go on his own calm and reserved way, working steadily to his heart's content, laying up stores of invaluable knowledge, and wondering at the beauties spread so prodigally before his eyes.

Travellers are frequently wont to set down their impressions, especially those to whom such impressions are in the nature of education, and Banks is said to have made many notes in this way. Unfortunately the only ones which have been preserved are those in which he criticises the famous Venus de Medici. The memorandum is rather a long one, but that must not prevent me from setting it forth here.

"This divine statue, having been broken in several places, displays now the left arm from the elbow, and the right arm from the shoulder, of modern composition. In these lie the only defects of this otherwise perfect figure, for the wrists and the fingers are evidently too small for the other corporeal proportions. These faults have arisen from the erroneous notion that small legs and arms are beauties in women, whereas those parts being more fleshy than in men, must in nature be thicker in proportion to the size of the body. Some connois-

seurs have also thought this elegant figure round-shouldered, because the back from the nape of the neck is rounder than where that beautiful part is distorted into a straight line by unnatural bandages. This love-inviting Venus stands on one leg only, which inflates the principal muscle, while it depresses another into a beautiful dimple. Indeed, were the figure scrutinised by square and compass, the mathematician and anatomist must receive equal satisfaction with the connoisseur. The modest elegance of her attitude is well known from the numberless casts of this admired statue in every country—but her face has beauty and expression so happily combined, that at first sight one sees she is conscious of her exposed state. The face is truly Grecian, having a straight line from her forehead to the end of her nose; her mouth is small, and the hair is tied in a graceful knot behind a small but elegantly shaped head. It is to be lamented that the marble of this figure is not of that fleshy whiteness which so delicately characterises the Apollo of Belvidere."

This is, of course, but a note, apparently jotted down to aid the writer's memory, and those who, like Byron, are annoyed to see this lovely relic of antiquity thus coldly appraised, should not forget this. What is rather curious is that a man like Banks, who was full of poetry, and recognised, as well as any, the inherent beauty of such things as he here catalogues rather than describes, should have been content to set down his impressions so prosaically.

The general effect on his senses of what he saw in Rome cannot be better told than in these words of Cunningham: "He confessed that all the visions of excellence which had ever visited his dreams were now realised before his waking eyes—that the antique sculpture fairly transcended all that he had conceived of it, and that in the heroic style of art rivalry with those magic marbles was more than hopeless."

Among Banks's productions during his sojourn in Rome, three deserve particular mention: one, "Carac-

tacus and his Family in the Presence of Claudius" ;* the second, "Psyche stealing the Golden Flame," in which Psyche was intended to represent the Princess Sophia of Gloucester, and which subsequently became the property of that branch of the Royal Family ; the third, "A Figure Emblematic of Love seizing the Human Soul," or "Love catching a Butterfly." Of these the last was the most original and the most beautiful ; and of it, Banks's biographer goes so far as to say that "perhaps for grace, symmetry of form, and accuracy of contour, it has scarcely been equalled by a modern hand, and might almost vie with those productions of the ancients to which his admiration as well as emulation has been so constantly directed."

It is a sad commentary on the want of reliance on their own judgments, which characterised the many English residents and visitors in Rome, that they did not purchase any of Banks's works. They were admired and praised, and there the matter ended ; and it is a fact that during the seven years he remained there (for he had added four to the three years paid for by the Royal Academy) he secured many friendly critics, but no buyers. It has been suggested that this arose from the fact that the travellers sought for antiques, or, at any rate, such things as appeared to be antiques, and that modern work did not appeal to them, but, as we have seen, on Banks's own showing, Fuseli was able to dispose of his productions, and so were Wickstead and Barron. What seems, I think, a better reason for Banks's want of success in this direction was the fact that he was a quiet, unadvertising man who failed to make it worth the while of the middlemen—the Nortons and Byreses of the time —to exploit him and his productions, and that he lost many of those chances of disposing of his works which others, less squeamish, were able to secure.

In 1779 Banks returned to England, and taking a house on lease in Newman Street, he added to it a gallery and studio, and set up as a sculptor ; but by this time

* This was afterwards purchased by the Marquis of Buckingham, and was at Stowe.

two notable contemporaries had arisen who practically divided public patronage between them—Nollekens, to whom every one went for busts, and Bacon, who received all the chief commissions for groups and monuments. The result was that Banks worked and waited in vain,* and for five years lived on his private resources, and grew sick at heart with hope deferred.

"Not finding his talents sufficiently appreciated at home, on his return from Italy," says his daughter, "he determined on making a trial of Russia, where he had very favourable prospects held out to him by the Court." It may seem curious that the sculptor should have elected to journey to a country then so difficult of access and so barbaric; but he was not the only man of talent whom the promises of the great Catherine had lured to her Northern Court; Diderot and others will occur to the mind. The Empress was anxious to make her capital a centre of literary and artistic activity; she loved the converse of men of letters and the air of cultivated distinction which they, as well as artists, shed around her frost-bound throne. Her emissaries were active in all parts of Europe, and in Rome Banks's poetical conceptions, though they may not have appealed to the antiquarians, possibly attracted those who were on the look-out on the Empress's behalf. The fact that the sculptor had not achieved a marketable success, probably made Catherine think that he would be the more willing to join her circle of brilliant and cultivated men. And she was right. He could not fail to be dazzled by the imperial condescension, and he set out alone, leaving his wife and daughter in London, for Russia, carrying with him some of the best of his productions. His reception was cordial, and the Empress immediately purchased the "Cupid and Moth," which he had executed in Rome, and placed it in a temple she had erected expressly for its reception in the grounds of Tsarskoe-Selo; and she also commissioned Banks to model a statue of

* Mrs. Newton commissioned him to execute a large monument to Bishop Newton, but it never emerged beyond the initial stage, and Banks subsequently made a much smaller one which was set up in Bow Church.

herself. Indeed, so far as the imperial reception was concerned, the sculptor had nothing to complain of, but there were other matters which troubled him: the dissolute character of the Russian Court and the well-known *fredaines* of its mistress, combined with a barbaric love of splendour which made itself apparent in military reviews and gorgeous pageants, were far from pleasing to one who was essentially religious and whose art besides required a quieter *milieu.* Added to this the rigorous climate affected the sculptor's health, and though the Empress was apparently as gracious as possible, the lead she had given in the matter of commissions was not largely followed by her nobles, and, in short, Banks realised that he had made a mistake. Nor did the last imperial commission he received tend to reconcile him to his uncongenial surroundings: Catherine suggested to him the rather appalling task of perpetuating the Armed Neutrality in marble! I do not know how he represented this impossible subject, or whether he did so at all. Indeed it has been said that he incontinently left Russia rather than face disaster in attempting such a problem. Certain it is that, under the excuse of illness, he suddenly quitted the country, and arrived in London (1782), to the astonishment of his wife, who was at that moment on the point of joining him in the North.

Back amidst congenial surroundings, the sculptor set to work as undauntedly as ever to produce those classic and poetical groups of figures which had always appealed to him more than they did to his contemporaries. From this period dates his heroic statue of the "Mourning" or "Frenzied Achilles," as it is variously called, which was completed in plaster, in 1784, after he had produced and exhibited at the Royal Academy a version in low relief of the same subject. The idea was taken from the incident, in the first book of the "Iliad," where Briseis is carried away, and Achilles complains of the deed to Thetis. Those who saw the work in the artist's studio were full of admiration, and Banks himself seems to have regarded it as his masterpiece. The disappointment of the sculptor can therefore be

imagined when, on its completion and while being taken from his studio in Newman Street to Somerset House for exhibition, the van in which it was being conveyed met with an accident and, being overturned, the precious statue was smashed into fragments. It is said that Banks witnessed the disaster, but that, notwithstanding his loss—which meant not merely that of a year's hard labour, but also his chance of making a name by this work on which he had counted—he returned home so self-possessed that neither his wife nor his daughter had any reason to suppose that any trouble had befallen him. Subsequently gathering the fragments together, Banks, aided by his brother Charles, with incredible patience and ingenuity, pieced them together, and eventually restored the statue to its original state.

This arduous undertaking, tedious as it must have been, was not thrown away, for Mr. Johnes, of Hafod, having seen the restored work, was so delighted with it,* that he at once commissioned Banks to copy it in marble; and this proved the beginning of a long and intimate relationship between the sculptor and his patron, resulting not only in his producing many works for the latter's home in Cardiganshire, but also in his being a frequent guest to that beautiful spot.

After the marble for the statue of Achilles had been secured, and the sculptor was about to begin it, Mr. Johnes changed his mind and persuaded Banks, if the latter did not himself suggest the subject, to produce instead a group representing "Thetis dipping Achilles in the Styx." It is said that Mr. Johnes caused Banks to represent Mrs. Johnes as Thetis, and this was perhaps the secret of the change of subject. However this may be, the sculptor produced a beautiful work, and it occupied the place of honour in the conservatory at Hafod.

It was in the year 1784 that saw the execution of this work, that Banks was made an A.R.A., becoming a full R.A. within the following twelvemonth; honours which came to him as marks of recognition of his success

* It is now at Burlington House, having been presented to the British Institution by Mrs. Banks on the death of her husband.

in his art, on the part of the Academy, even if his fame had not yet largely penetrated into the minds of the general public.

Another group, apparently executed for Mr. Johnes, was that representing Thetis and her nymphs ascending from the sea to condole with Achilles on the death of Patroclus, and dates from this period. This was an oval *alto-relievo*, less than half life-size; and although certain points in it have been adversely criticised, such as the abnormal length of the lower limbs of the figures, on the whole it seems to have been a success, one critic remarking that "the buoyant ease with which they (the figures) make their way from the waves, and the graceful elegance with which they sail into upper air, and surround as with a garland the mourning hero, disarm all censure, and leave little admiration for the Achilles who has cast himself down on the shore, and seems resolved on not being comforted."

Among Banks's other productions may be named his "Fallen Titan," which he presented as his Diploma work on being elected an R.A. in 1785; and his small, though on the whole fine, "Jupiter and the Titans," a bas-relief in an oval not more than a dozen inches in length and about half as high. In addition to these examples of the classic convention, of which Banks was so whole-hearted and, on occasion, inspired an interpreter, the sculptor received a few commissions for sepulchral monuments. Of these, that to Woollett the engraver, in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, and that to Isaac Watts (a bust) in the south aisle, may be mentioned, as well as a memorial to Challoner Chute, Speaker of the House of Commons in 1659, for the Chapel of The Vyne, near Sherfield, Hants, and one to Mrs. Petrie, in Lewisham Church, the model for which, called "Pity weeping at the Tomb of Benevolence," was executed in 1788. But his most successful production in this genre was the monument to Penelope Boothby, only daughter of Sir Brooke Boothby, in Ashbourne Church, Derbyshire. This beautiful and poetically conceived work met with instant

success, and when it was exhibited at Somerset House, Queen Charlotte and some of her daughters, on the royal view day, stood long before it, and were moved to tears at its simple pathos. The child it commemorates was not quite six years of age at the time of her death; but she was even then, according to the inscription on her tomb, "in form and intellect most excellent." Dr. Mavor* thus describes the work: "Simplicity and elegance appear in the workmanship—tenderness and innocence in the image. On a marble pedestal and slab, like a low table, is a mattress, with the child lying on it, both likewise in white marble. Her cheek, expressive of suffering mildness, reclines on the pillow, and her little fevered hands gently rest on each other near to her head. The plain and only drapery is a frock, the skirt flowing easily out before, and a ribbon sash, the knot twisted forward as it were by the restlessness of pain, and the two ends spread out in the same direction with the frock. The delicate naked feet are carelessly folded over each other, and the whole appearance is as if she had just turned in the tossings of her illness to seek an easier or a cooler place of rest."

Banks did not achieve a like success with many of his other monuments; for instance, that to Sir Eyre Coote,† in Westminster Abbey, for which he received the commission from the East India Company, exhibits many fine points: the anatomy and expression of the Mahratta captive on it are excellent; but there is evident in it, as there is in the sculptor's monuments to Captain Westcott and Captain Burgess, in St. Paul's Cathedral, that determination to present modern men and circumstances in classic guises which destroys the probabilities and often raises a smile instead of creating admiration. Naval officers ungarbed are not very likely objects; we expect the nude in classic designs, but are apt to resent

* Mavor, noted for his spelling-book, was once rector of Henley-on-Thames.

† The "Dictionary of National Biography" speaks of a monument to "General Coutts" executed for the India House! An engraving of the Coote monument forms the front to the *European Magazine* for 1790.

it when introduced into modern life. But nothing could make Banks see this; he was as classically minded as the French painter David, and I fear failed to attain the high position he deserved because of this, for the majority of people no more care for classic sculpture than they do for classic quotations—they understand neither and resent the thing almost as an affront.*

The monument to Westcott, mentioned above, was Banks's last achievement, being completed indeed but a few weeks before his death in 1805; so that the sculptor boldly clung to his opinions to the end, although those opinions were largely responsible for his never having been very extensively employed. This want of general recognition, however, was not without its advantages: it permitted Banks to superintend the education of his daughter, an employment in which he found great delight, and he was enabled also to give play to his fancy in numberless sketches and studies in which classic subjects largely predominated, and in which, as he was always a capital draughtsman, some of his best work was enshrined.

He was not a great producer of busts; probably the fame of Nollekens in this particular direction made him chary of entering into competition with so formidable a rival; but a few by him are extant—for instance, that of Mrs. Conway; another of Mrs. Siddons, as Melpomene; one of Warren Hastings and one of Horne Tooke, which he said he undertook "from the love he bore to their noble looks"; while the statue of Shakespeare, which was, for a time, placed outside Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, in Pall Mall, was from his hand, having been a commission from the artistic alderman.

Banks died on February 2, 1805, in the seventieth year of his age, and was buried in Paddington Churchyard. In Westminster Abbey is a tablet to his memory, the inscription on which runs as follows: "In memory of Thomas Banks, Esq., R.A., Sculptor, whose superior abilities in the profession added a lustre to the arts of

* Two other sepulchral monuments by Banks are those to Mr. Hand and to Baretti, in Cripplegate Church and Marylebone Old Church respectively.

his country, and whose character as a man reflected honour on human nature."

His personal appearance and his character are thus described by Cunningham: "In person he was tall—with looks silent and dignified,* and an erectness of carriage which became him well: he spoke seldom—had a winning sweetness in his way of address, and a persuasive manner, which was not unfelt by his academic companions. He was simple, and frugal in his general style of living, yet liberal to excess in all that related to the encouragement of art—his purse was open to virtuous sufferers—and, what is far more, he shrank not from going personally into the houses of the poor and the sick, to console and aid them in their adversity. In his younger days it was his custom to work at his marbles in the solitude of the Sabbath morning, when his assistants were not at hand to interrupt him: but as he advanced in life he discontinued a practice which even the profane will not openly commend—and became an example to his brother artists in professional abstinence during the seventh day. He grew strict in religious duty, and, like Flaxman, added another to the number of those devout sculptors whose purity of life and reach of intellect are an honour to their country."

As an artist Banks occupies a high place. He can legitimately claim to have been the first to introduce a poetical character into sculpture. He was a classic, though not so pronounced a one, perhaps, as Flaxman, who was apt to be rather formal and stilted in his desire to reflect the ancient glories of Greek and Roman sculpture; Banks's classicism was able to take on a human character which Flaxman's frequently wanted. He excelled in those subjects which are based on pathetic incidents—such as his Penelope Boothby monument; his more purely classic productions were characterised by vigour and technical dexterity superimposed on an intimate knowledge of the subject in all its bearings.

* There was a short account of Banks, with a portrait, in the *European Magazine* for September 1791, and there is a bust of him in the nave of Westminster Abbey.

Like many of those whose love of the antique was an all-absorbing passion, he was apt to take hints from classic remains to such an extent that his claim to originality has somewhat suffered in the process, and although he was, according to his daughter, a minute observer of nature, there is no doubt that he loved better to study it through the medium of the great sculptors of antiquity, than to reproduce it at first hand. If his work proves that he was, to some extent, indifferent to finish, it also shows that his mind was imbued with the splendid vigour and serene confidence of his early masters; and if he cannot be compared with Nollekens for busts, or with Bacon for groups, he takes a high place among British sculptors for elevation of thought, for earnestness and largeness of aim, and for occasional undoubted success in results.

Although he was a quiet and reserved man, Banks's friendships were both numerous and catholic; his associates ranging from Cosway and Hoppner, Fuseli and Flaxman, to—Horne Tooke. So intimate, indeed, was he with the last-named, frequently visiting him at Wimbledon, that he nearly became involved in the prosecution which was undertaken against "Parson Horne," as he was called, as will be seen by the following anecdote, told originally by the sculptor's daughter:

"I remember," she says, "when Tooke and Hardy and others were arrested on a charge of high treason, that an officer waited upon my father with an order from the Secretary of State to go to his office. I chanced to be in the next room, and the door being partly open, I heard all that passed. My father only requested to be allowed to go into his study and give directions to his workmen; this was complied with, and he then accompanied the messenger. I said nothing to my mother of what I had heard, since my father had been silent for fear of exciting unnecessary apprehensions: but I sat with much trouble at heart during several hours, when to my inexpressible joy I heard his well-known knock at the door, and ran to greet his return—a return rendered doubly happy, since his own simple and manly explana-

tion had acquitted him of all suspicion of treasonable designs or of a thought injurious to his country."

Banks counted many admirers during his life, and many friends. One who was both was Flaxman, who drew the sculptor's portrait in profile, from life, on June 22, 1804. Speaking, on one occasion, of his late *confrère*, Flaxman remarked, "We have had a sculptor in the late Mr. Banks, whose works have eclipsed the most if not all of his Continental contemporaries"; and there is a story of how, being seated with Mrs. Siddons at the sale of the sculptor's effects, he heard the auctioneer remarking about an antique figure which was among them: "Behold where the deceased artist found some of his beauties." Whereupon he jumped up, exclaiming, "Sir, you do Mr. Banks much wrong—*he* wanted no assistance." Let this be his epitaph! *

* During his later years Banks made a fine collection of drawings and engravings by the old masters, on which Sir Thomas Lawrence, whose famous gathering of similar things was once well known, wrote an interesting letter of praise and criticism to the sculptor's daughter, dated April 21, 1826.

CHAPTER VIII

JOSEPH NOLLEKENS

Nollekens is known to the general public better, perhaps, than any other sculptor, because of the "Life" of him which J. T. Smith,* his pupil and executor, wrote; but he is not so favourably known by that work as he deserves to be. Smith, indeed, seems to have darkened all the shadows. He has set down the small failings which human nature in general, and Nollekens's nature in particular, was heir to; his parsimony, his sharpness of tongue, his not very pleasing, and even rather sordid, private life are all "set in a note-book, learned, and conned by rote," and as a consequence we rise from the reading of "Nollekens and his Times" with a general idea of a somewhat snuffy, miserly, crabbed old man, brimful of gossip about men and things, who thought more of saving a candle-end than of achieving fame, and who regarded money as of more consequence than immortality. One would seek in vain for a reason for this most ungentle of reminiscences—most candid of biographies, as it has been more amiably termed—did we not know that Smith, who had expected a substantial legacy, received but a modest £100 for his trouble as executor. In short, his "Life" is a piece of revenge, and is characterised by all the rancour of a disappointed man. As such it might well have been regarded as essentially worthless, but Smith was a picturesque and vivacious writer. Here, and in his "Book for a Rainy Day," he has gathered together all sorts of curious and out-of-the-way information, notes, and stray jottings of men and things which have become valuable in the

* Nathaniel Smith, J. T. Smith's father, was a fellow student with Nollekens, and afterwards his chief assistant.

JOSEPH NOLLEKENS

course of years rather than by their own intrinsic importance; and thus we cannot afford to wholly disregard him, although, as we shall, I think, see, the portrait he has left us of one of the finest sculptors of the day (within his limits—the limits, that is, of bust-portraiture) is distorted, biased, and wholly unfair to its original.

Nollekens came of an artistic family; his grandfather, a native of Antwerp, was a painter who had resided for a time in this country; his father, also born in Antwerp, likewise came to England, where he married a certain Mary Anne Le Sacq, or Sacque, and settled in Dean Street, Soho, where Joseph Nollekens, the second of five children, was born on August 11, 1737, being baptized in the Roman Catholic Chapel in Duke Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. His father—"Old Nollekens," as he is generally called (his real names were Cornelius * Franciscus Nollekens)—had the character of being rich and parsimonious; also he was a Roman Catholic, and it was these combined attributes that caused his house to be attacked by the mob in 1745, when the painter narrowly escaped being plundered, if not worse. Three years later—to be precise, on January 21, 1748—he died, leaving a widow with her young family. Mrs. Nollekens, however, not long after married a Welshman and retired with him to the Principality, and of her we hear no more, except that when Nollekens went to Rome, she gave him a "housewife" which the sculptor always kept, affirming that it was the most useful thing she could have given him. "I would not take any money for it," he added. As might have been expected from this rather distracted childhood, Nollekens got his education as best he might, and little of it at that. He is said to have acquired no proper knowledge of grammar or spelling; but a grasp of figures which he early exhibited, stood him in better stead than would either orthography or syntax.

That he must have shown artistic proclivities at an early age is indicated by the fact that, as a boy, he was sent to Shipley's Drawing School in the Strand, where he was a fellow student with Nathaniel Smith, the father of

* He assumed the name of Joseph instead of that of Cornelius.

J. T. Smith. In 1750, being then but thirteen, he was placed under the care of Scheemakers; here young Nollekens seems to have picked up what knowledge of sculpture he could, and laboured diligently at the task, although no small portion of his time was apparently occupied in doing menial work for the Scheemakers household—in fact, in fulfilling the traditional apprentice's calling. He had the reputation of being quiet, obliging, and industrious, and Mrs. Scheemakers said, "Joey was so honest that she could always trust him to stone the raisins"; while he was wont to attend to the duties of getting beer for the servants so conscientiously that he once, in after years, told how he "always crept along to save the head of foam that the lasses might taste it in all its strength!" His one source of amusement, beyond his love of drawing and modelling, was bell-ringing, which he was allowed to indulge in at St. James's Church, Piccadilly, and elsewhere; and if Scheemakers missed him and heard a passing bell tolling, he was generally pretty sure of being able to lay his hand on the boy.

As Nollekens made progress in his art, the desire of some tangible results of his labour awakened in him, and he began to compete for the medals of the Society of Arts. Nor had he to wait long before success crowned his efforts, and in the books of the Society, the following entries prove that he was already on the road which eventually led him to fame. "In 1759, to Joseph Nollekens was adjudged the sum of £15 15*s*. for a model in clay of figures. In 1760, for a model in clay, a bas-relief, £31 10*s*., and in the same year, for a model in clay of a dancing faun, £10 10*s*."

This success, as well as the annoyance caused him by the practical jokes and even insults which he had had to undergo in the rough household and studio of Scheemakers, made him think that a change would not only enlarge his mind but put an end to petty persecutions from which, says Cunningham, "he had neither vigour of body nor sarcastic acidity of tongue to protect himself," and therefore, after a ten years' novitiate with a master

with whom personally he is said never to have had an unfriendly word, he left England in 1760, and, taking Paris on his way, set out for Rome. Arrived there, he found that all he possessed in money was twenty-one guineas, and it is difficult to understand how he managed to exist, for although soon after his arrival he executed a *basso-relievo*, sent it to England, and received for it a prize of £10 10*s*., the time occupied in the work and its transit, must have swamped what little ready money he possessed. But industry and frugality, both qualities Nollekens possessed to a large degree, can overcome many difficulties, and besides which richer rewards were in store for him. Thus in 1762, for a *basso-relievo* representing "Timoclea before Alexander," which he executed in marble, and consigned to England, he was given a premium of fifty guineas by the Society of Arts. He began, too, to make friends, not only among the natives but also with the English visitors in Rome. Garrick met him one day in the Vatican, and exclaimed, "Why, you are the little fellow to whom we gave the prizes at the Society of Arts," shook him by the hand cordially, invited him to breakfast, and, what was more, commissioned him to model his bust, for which he gave the young artist twelve guineas; "all in gold," remembered Nollekens in his older days. It was the first bust he had ever tried his hand on. Another famous man with whom he came in contact in Italy, was Sterne, of whom he modelled a bust in terra-cotta in 1765, a piece of work which drew general notice to him, and showed him where his *forte* lay. Nollekens always thought highly of this performance, to the end of his life, and once exclaimed, *à propos* of it: "Dance made my picture with my hand leaning on Sterne's head—*he was right.*"

Another friend he made in Rome was the brilliant but coarse, bad-tempered artist, James Barry, a man in whom genius was so nearly allied to madness, that a very thin partition indeed separated the two. A story of the intimacy between the painter and sculptor was often related by Nollekens in later days. As they were, one night, on the point of leaving the English coffee-house at

Rome, Barry exchanged hats with his friend, although that of Nollekens was shabby and old compared with the gold-laced one belonging to the elder man. The next morning, however, Barry returned Nollekens his head-gear, and on the latter asking him why he had taken it, said, "Why, to tell you the truth, my dear Joey, I fully expected to be assassinated last night, and I was to have been known by my laced hat!"

About this time there was an easy method of making money which many artists and others in Rome indulged in. This was the acquisition of antiques of all kinds, with a view to their consignment to England, where they fetched high prices and made the artistic reputation of many a stay-at-home collector. Nollekens, who realised that some other means besides the laborious carving of busts and statues, which could not always be expected to find a purchaser, was necessary to advance his fortunes, threw himself, heart and soul, into the trade. Snapping up, with the eye of a connoisseur, many an unconsidered trifle, he either sent it to England, if fairly complete as it was, or if defective, botched it up, and *made* it complete. Certain things he kept for himself; terra-cottas by Michael Angelo or John of Bologna among them, some of which he afterwards disposed of at large prices, but the majority went to add to Mr. Townley's gallery or to those of Mr. Blundell or Mr. Locke, of Norbury Park, and others. At that time there was a certain Jenkins in Rome who was a professional collector of such things, and he had commissions from Mr. Locke to send him specimens at the maximum price of a hundred guineas. Having despatched a head of Minerva, of which Mr. Locke did not approve, the latter returned it to Jenkins. About the same moment Nollekens had purchased a trunk or torso for fifty guineas. Jenkins showed him the returned head, and between them they agreed that Nollekens should have it for nothing, together with two hundred and twenty guineas for the trouble he would be at, with the object of his placing it on the torso; Jenkins to receive a share of any profits that might accrue. This was accordingly done, and the

"restorers" sold the completed statue for no less than a thousand guineas.

Talking of these early days, in after years, Nollekens once remarked, "I got the first money I ever won by putting antiques together. Hamilton and I and Jenkins generally used to go shares in what we bought, and as I had to match the pieces and clean them, I had the best part of the profits. Gavin Hamilton was a good fellow; but as for Jenkins, he followed the trade of supplying the foreign visitors with intaglios and cameos made by his own people whom he kept in the ruins of the Coliseum, fitted up for them to work in slyly by themselves. He sold cameos as fast as he made them."

It can be imagined that this sort of thing paid better (although the incident just recorded was certainly an exceptional one) than the modelling of busts, for which the sculptor could hardly expect more than a relatively small sum. But that he had patrons for original works during his Roman days is well known, Lords Bessborough, Selsey, and Yarborough being among them, for the latter of whom, particularly, he produced much, including a bust of his patron and a "Mercury and Venus chiding Cupid."

Another form of turning what many honest people do not, apparently, hesitate to regard as an honest penny, was the smuggling into this country of all kinds of contraband goods, stockings, lace, gloves, &c.; and many a Nollekens bust, looking as if butter would not melt between its placid lips, contained such things neatly secreted within its crevices: "There, do you know, that bust, my lord, held my lace ruffles that I went to Court in when I came from Rome," said Nollekens one day to Lord Mansfield, pointing to the famous head of Laurence Sterne, who, of all men, would have enjoyed the joke, we may be sure.

After a ten years' residence in Rome, during which time he had lived very frugally indeed, and had accumulated a considerable amount of money in the various ways I have mentioned, Nollekens returned to England, and took, on lease, 9 Mortimer Street, Cavendish Square,

a house then the property and residence of Newton, one of the Royal Academicians, and a now wholly forgotten painter. Hardly had Nollekens set up his studio and workshop here, than orders came to him in abundance; his name had already become favourably known through his busts of Sterne and Garrick, and many of his noble patrons in Rome, who had returned to England, helped to spread about his fame. Smith, indeed, says that so rapid was his success, that he knew him, at this period, to have had as many as four sitters a day.

He now began to exhibit at the Royal Academy, to which institution he presented a cast of the torso which he had brought from Rome with this specific object, and in 1771 was elected an Associate, being raised to the higher dignity of R.A. in the following year. A further proof of the reputation Nollekens had by this time attained is afforded by the fact that the king on signing his diploma, expressed special satisfaction at his election, and soon after commissioned him to execute a bust of himself.

During the year 1771, the sculptor exhibited three works; a bust of a nobleman, probably Lord Bessborough, a model of a Bacchus, and a group representing Pætus and Arria; while, during the following years till 1779 inclusive, he never missed an exhibition, being usually represented by three or four works, including generally one or more busts. It would be strange if so inveterate a gossip as Nollekens became in his later years should not have treasured up some reminiscences of the king, whose bust he modelled about this time (1774), and of Dr. Johnson, who sat to him about the same period, and we have some characteristic anecdotes concerning his Majesty and his blunt and self-possessed sculptor.

"When I was modelling the King's *busto*," says Nollekens, "I was commanded to go to receive the King at Buckingham House at seven o'clock in the morning, for that was the time his Majesty shaved. After he had shaved himself, and before he had put on his stock, I modelled my *busto*. I *sot* him down, to be even with myself, and the King, seeing me go about him and about him, said to me, 'What do you want?' I said, 'I want to measure

your nose. The Queen tells me I have made my nose too broad.' 'Measure it, then,' said the King." Dalton, the king's librarian, who was present at this recital, here remarked, "Ay, my good friend, I have heard it often mentioned in the library; and it has also been affirmed that you pricked the King's nose with your calipers. I will tell you what the King said of you when you did not attend according to command one morning: 'Nollekens is not come. I forgot, it is a saint's day, and he is a Catholic!'"

There is another story told about Nollekens's independence in the matter of keeping his royal appointments, which forms a continuation to the king's remark. On receiving Nollekens the following morning, George III. exclaimed: "Well, Nollekens, where were you yesterday?" "Why," replied the sculptor, "as it was a saint's day, I thought you would not have me, so I went to see the beasts fed in the Tower; and do you know," he continued, "they have got two such lions there! and the biggest did roar so! My heart, how he did roar!" And he is said to have imitated the sounds for the benefit of his royal auditor, so vigorously and so near the king's ear, that his Majesty was obliged to move away! Other stories are extant all exhibiting a certain unconscious simplicity and self-possession in Nollekens, in his relations with his sovereign, which were, after all, probably not unpleasing to one who was so essentially simple and unpretentious himself.

The sculptor is said to have had more trouble over the drapery on the king's bust than over anything else he ever attempted, and it was due to an accident that he achieved success at last. He had thrown the cloth two or three times a day for a fortnight in order to get it to lie naturally, but in vain, when one day his servant came into his studio to ask him for money to pay a bill. Nollekens threw the cloth across the bust, in order to get the money, and when he returned to it, found it had resolved itself into beautiful lines and creases; with the result that he achieved, as he himself always said, by far the best setting of drapery he had ever done.

The bust of Johnson was also a particularly successful one, but the Doctor himself always objected to its being "loaded with hair." "A man, sir, should be portrayed as he appears in company," he once exclaimed, but Nollekens having found a beggar with a head of hair which he thought suitable, would model it and place it on Johnson's head.* "The bust," says Smith, "is a wonderfully fine one, and very like, but certainly the sort of hair *is* objectionable"; while even Johnson allowed "that it was very like, and that there could be no doubt that the sculptor had great skill in his art. Yet," he added, "it is amazing what ignorance of certain points one sometimes finds in a man of eminence." †

About this time Nollekens fell in love with Miss Mary Welch, the daughter of Sanders Welch, Esq., who had succeeded Henry Fielding as a magistrate, on the latter's departure for Lisbon. After an apparently short courtship, they were married at Marylebone Church. Smith has much to say about the lady's wedding dress, and trousseau, which cost £200; her personal appearance, which her husband once described as "scorny"; her reading and her memory, her parsimony, her medical recipes, and her love of whist, at which she was apparently as great a precisian as Mrs. Battle herself. These matters need not trouble us, however, and when we know that the Nollekens's married life was not unhappy; that every Sunday the sculptor and his wife used to walk regularly to the corner of Mortimer Street, where they separated, the lady going to the parish church, Nollekens himself to the Roman Catholic chapel in Duke Street; that they had no children, and had not infrequent quarrels which did not affect their real regard for each other;

* Johnson mentions this bust in two letters to Miss Lucy Porter: in the first, dated November 20, 1777, asking her opinion of the cast of it; in the second, dated February 19 of the same year, in reply to one from the lady saying she did not care for it, and remarking that Mrs. Thrale, Mr. Reynolds, and Mrs. Garrick were of the same way of thinking, the Doctor writes: "My bust was made for the exhibition and shewn in honour of the artist, who is a man of reputation above any of the other sculptors."

† After having kept a model an hour, Nollekens offered him a shilling, which he refused, saying he could have made more by begging.

we know, I think, all we need to about the domestic side of Nollekens's life. In the pages of Smith will be found all kinds of anecdotes about Mrs. Nollekens and her *ménage;* it is mere tea-table tattle and, if pleasing to some people who delight in such details, is not at all germane to a consideration of the sculptor's career, which here alone concerns us.

Although Nollekens executed a number of groups and statues, monuments, and even a few chimney-pieces, as well as other subsidiary work, it was in his busts that his true greatness was exhibited, and in this direction he became not only the chief exponent of his day, but one of the most eminent of modern times. His studio was almost as crowded as was that of Reynolds, and with an equally fashionable throng; but those who visited both must have been not a little astonished and amused at the difference in the reception they received. The courtly grace and inherent "grand manner" of Sir Joshua found no counterpart in the brusque, unconventional address of Nollekens. "Don't look so 'scorny,' else you will spoil my bust—and you're a very fine woman —I think it will make one of my very best busts," he said to one great lady. "Look for a minute the other way, for then I shall get rid of that slight shyness in your eye, which, though not ungraceful in life, is unusual in art," was his address to another; while on one occasion he exclaimed to a lady who kept moving about while sitting to him, "Lord, woman, what matter how handsome you are, if you won't sit still till I model you?"

But it is time to turn to Nollekens's works, which are, after all, what count in his career. From 1771 to 1776 inclusive, he exhibited but eight busts, one being that of the king, which was shown in 1774, and nine groups and figures, including his "Bacchus, Cupid, and Psyche," "Venus chiding Cupid," and "Hope leaning on an Urn." The next ten years, however, saw him busier, and down to 1786 we find thirteen busts and eight groups and figures exhibited by him. Thus he produced his "Diana" for the Marquis of Rockingham, and his "Cupid and Mercury" for Lord Yarborough, besides a

"Juno" and an "Adonis," among the statues; while the busts represented many of those patrons whom the sculptor counted in such large numbers.

It was about this time, too, that he was commissioned to undertake the large monument commemorating the three captains who fell in Rodney's great victory of April 12, 1782, and which is now in Westminster Abbey. This work was produced in a frank rivalry with Bacon, but it is heavy and uninspired and has none of the distinction or grace which the contemporary sculptor was accustomed to put into those groups in which he so far outdistanced Nollekens. The monument is an immense structure: Genius hangs the medallions of the three naval heroes, Manners, Blair, and Bayne, on a column; Britannia stands by; while Fame with a laurel wreath is ready to crown the illustrious trio. The work is finely executed and in parts not ill-conceived, but it wants that touch of genius and lightness which might have made it a really great work of art. It is said that it remained in Nollekens's studio for fourteen years *awaiting the inscription.* At last the sculptor applied direct to the king to use his influence to get it placed *in situ,* an act which so incensed Pitt that he would never sit to Nollekens for his bust nor recommend him in any way; and yet, says Smith, "it is a fact that, after the decease of that great statesman, Mr. Nollekens made no less a sum by him than £15,000," executing the statue and pedestal for Trinity College, Cambridge, for which he received £4000, as well as seventy-four busts of the Minister, in marble, at about a hundred and twenty guineas each, and over six hundred casts at six guineas apiece.

A propos of the statue of Pitt, the following remarks of Smith are interesting as showing the economical methods employed by Nollekens in his labours: "The marble for the figure did not ultimately cost him more than twenty pounds; for he had so cunningly economised the block that he cut from the corners several pieces for various busts: and even farther than this, the block not being long enough by the depth of Mr. Pitt's head, he

contrived to drill out a lump from between the legs large enough for the head, which he put on the shoulders of the block." *

Another anecdote further emphasises Nollekens's ability to make the most of small material. "It is reported," writes his biographer, "that once when Nollekens was walking round the yard with a brother artist, he was questioned by him why he kept so many small pieces of marble, to which Nollekens replied: 'They'll all come into use.' 'What's the use of this lump?' asked his friend. 'Oh, that will do for a small *busto*.' 'Why, it's only seven inches thick.' 'Ay, but then, you know, I shall model a *busto* for that piece with the head twisted, looking over the shoulder!'"

During the period from 1786 to 1800, Nollekens was chiefly engaged in producing busts, and although only about a dozen of these were exhibited, he is known to have executed quite three times as many. As he increased in reputation and demand, his prices were raised, and where he had been satisfied with 100 guineas for a bust he was now cheerfully paid half as much again. Cunningham gives an interesting account of the methods employed by the sculptor, in producing these works. "The model," he writes, "was the work of his own hands, and might cost him six or eight sittings before he gave it to his moulder to cast into plaster of paris—a mason rough-hewed it—a sculptor carved it as far as the model enabled him to go—a mason then resumed his labours, and placed it on the pedestal, when the master-hand went over the whole again, re-touching it from the living head. To the wages of all these various hands were to be added the value of the marble and the wages of the sawyer—amounting altogether to a considerable sum, varying, according to the difficulties of the portraiture and the hardness of the marble, from thirty to fifty pounds. He paid twenty-five pounds for the carving of each bust and fitting it on the pedestal—a fair price, which places his character above the reproach of being meanly parsimonious in the matter of wages."

* He gave his assistant who carved it, £300.

Although at this period (the close of the eighteenth and the opening of the nineteenth centuries) other eminent sculptors were at work in this country—Banks and Flaxman and Bacon being the chief of them—Nollekens retained his undoubted supremacy in the direction of busts; and the years 1800 to 1816 were the busiest in his long career. During the first ten years of this period he executed no fewer than fifty, in addition to his monuments and statues. In 1790, he had exhibited his "Lord Robert Manners expiring in the Arms of Victory" for a monument in the chapel of Belvoir Castle; in 1800, he produced a monumental group of a lady supported by a figure emblematic of Religion, and in the following year his sepulchral bas-relief to the third Duke of Dorset, who had died in the previous July, now in the Sackville Chapel at Knole. Besides these, various other monuments or sketches for monuments (that of Mrs. Howard of Corby Castle may be named specially) came from his hand, the last being (in 1811) the model for that to Mrs. Coke of Holkham, for the chapel there. But it was, as I have said, on busts that his chief labour was expended. In the list of exhibited works given at the end of Smith's "Nollekens and his Times," we find the names of the following people among the many who sat to him: in 1801, Mr. John Townly, the Duke of Bedford, Lady Hawkesbury, and Lord Petre; in 1802, Dr. Burney the Duke of Bedford, and Charles James Fox; in 1803, Mr. Stonor and Lord Moira; in 1804, the Hon. C. Grey, General Fitzpatrick, Lord Lauderdale, and Lord R. Spencer; in 1805, C. Townley and T. W. Coke; in 1808,* the Hon. Mr. Pelham, Lords Darnley and Wellesley, the Duke of Bedford, Sir W. W. Wynne, and the Prince of Wales; in 1810, the Duke and Duchess of Rutland, Lords Brownlow, Grenville,† and Mulgrave, the Hon. Mrs. Pelham, and Lady Charlemont; in 1811, Lords Castlereagh, Chatham, and Roos, Canning and Admiral Colpoys;

* No works were apparently shown in 1806–7.

† A satirical poem entitled "Hints to J. Nollekens, Esq., R.A., on his Modelling a Bust of Lord G——le," with a large folding plate, was published in 1808.

in 1812, Lords Brooke and Gwydir and Benjamin West; 1813, Spencer Perceval, Wellington, the Duke of York, and Lord George Cavendish; and in the three following years, Samuel Whitbread, Lords Charlemont, Cowper, and Aberdeen, and the Duke of Grafton; Lords Erskine and Egremont and the Rev. C. Burney; Thomas Coutts, Lords St. Helens and Liverpool, and the Duke of Newcastle. This list, which does not by any means exhaust even Nollekens's exhibited busts,* is sufficient to show the extent and importance of the patronage he enjoyed; but this is still further exemplified by an alphabetical list given, by Smith, of the names of those who either sat to him or of whom he executed busts from other sources. It is almost safe to say that there is hardly a famous man of his time absent, and not many well-known women. Some of these have been already incidentally mentioned before; others occur in the foregoing list, but a few of the most prominent I will set down here. Thus we find the names of Dr. Baillie, Sir Joseph Banks, and Lord Chancellor Bathurst together, the last having been executed for the Registrar's Room in the Six Clerks' Office in Chancery Lane; the Duke of Bolton is also here, and Mrs. Bradell, whom Sir Joshua painted so finely; Sir Eyre Coote and Lord Cowper; Provost Drummond, whose bust was placed in the Hall of the Royal Infirmary at Edinburgh; Lord Erskine and the Charles James Fox (mentioned before) which was apparently executed for the Empress Catherine of Russia, who is said to have possessed no fewer than twelve busts of the statesman, that by Nollekens being placed by her orders between those of Cicero and Demosthenes; Oliver Goldsmith, in the Poets' Corner at the Abbey, and Lord Gower, the great picture collector; the Duke of Gordon, one of Nollekens's finest efforts, Lord Granby, and Thomas Grenville, the great bibliophile; Lord Holland and Dr. Johnson; Dr. Keate, the famous headmaster of Eton, and Admiral King; Lord Lake and Lord Liverpool, and Lord Mansfield; Mr. Mathias, who wrote "The Pursuits of Litera-

* There is a bust of Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph's, in Twyford Church, near Winchester, by him.

ture," and Lord Mulgrave ; General Paoli, J. B. Peranesi, William Pitt, Lord Rockingham, the Empress Catherine of Russia, Laurence Sterne, and so many others that the reader's patience would tire before he had got half through the long list.

Many of the heads of the more popular people depicted, such as Fox and Pitt and others, were repeated over and over again by the sculptor, and as we have seen the latter alone produced him quite a small fortune.

Nollekens was accustomed, directly he heard of the death of an illustrious personage whom he might not have already reproduced in marble, to prepare a model of his features in order to be prepared for the orders which he expected, generally with good reason, would flow in upon him. Oftener than not he was specifically commissioned to produce these posthumous reproductions, and for that purpose was accustomed to take a death-mask from the features of the deceased. On such occasions he not, unfrequently, came into contact with the sorrowing relatives, and certain anecdotes have survived showing what some will consider want of feeling under sad circumstances. But Nollekens was by no means hard-hearted, and, as often as not, his apparently inconsiderate remarks were either made in the absent-mindedness of his artistic avocations, or, when premeditated, to ease the strain (as he thought) of present grief by distracting the mourner's attention.

The bust of William Pitt was produced from a cast taken after death, the sculptor being also aided by portraits of the deceased statesman. Smith relates how on Nollekens's return from Putney, where Pitt lay dead, with the death-mask in the coach, he pointed to it, lying on the opposite side of the carriage, and said to Gahagan, his assistant: "There—I would not take fifty guineas for that mask, I can tell ye." Considering that it enabled him to make £15,000, as I have before shown, he would certainly have made the worst bargain of his life, had he been induced to do so.

Neither this bust nor that of Fox can be regarded as among Nollekens's best achievements. Both were diffi-

cult subjects, and, as we know, the sculptor relied for reality and likeness for his success, and in these subjects it was difficult to obtain them; the light had departed from both when he was called upon to perpetuate their features.

It was while modelling another bust, that of Sir Eyre Coote, that Nollekens received a visit from Hone the painter, who had, in a fit of envy against Reynolds, produced a picture called "The Conjurer," in which he had not only represented Sir Joshua as copying the poses employed by Velasquez, Titian, Vandyck, and Rembrandt, but had also introduced scandalous allusions to the President's friendship with Angelica Kauffmann. Nollekens, who had a great regard for Reynolds, was very wroth at this want of taste and baseless insinuation, and Hone knew it. "Joseph Nollekens, Esquire, R.A, how do you do?" exclaimed the painter, with characteristic effrontery. "Well, now," replied Nollekens, working away, "I suppose you're come to get me to join you in the Academy to-night against Sir Joshua; but you're very much mistaken, and I can tell you more, I never will join you in anything you propose. You're always running your rigs against Sir Joshua; and you may say what you please, but I have never had any opinion of you since you painted the picture of 'The Conjurer' as you called it; I don't wonder they turned it out of the Academy. And pray what business had you to bring Angelica into it? You know it was your intention to ridicule her, whatever you and your printed paper and your affidavits may say; however, you may depend upon it she won't forget it, if Sir Joshua does." And although Hone tried to gain his goodwill by offering him some rare prints and by much gross flattery, Nollekens was not to be moved, and the discomfited painter had to beat an ignominious retreat.

A somewhat parallel anecdote, showing Nollekens's dislike to backbiting and evil speaking, may be given here. One evening Nollekens was met by Dr. Wolcot, whose foul-mouthed abuse of the Crown, under the pseudonym of "Peter Pindar," was then at its height. "Why,

Nollekens," exclaimed the writer, "you never speak to me now. Pray, what is the reason?" "Why," replied Nollekens, "you have published such lies of the King, and had the impudence to send them to me; but Mrs. Nollekens burnt them, and I desire you'll send no more. The Royal Family are very good to me, and are great friends to all artists, and I don't like to hear anybody say anything against them." Upon which the Doctor laughingly laid his cane across the sculptor's shoulders, and exclaimed: "Well said, little Nolly! I like a man who sticks to his friend. You shall make a bust of me for that." "I'll see you damned first," answered Nollekens, and he turned on his heel and left Wolcot to his own thoughts, for once unexpressed.

Among the busts already referred to, those of Spencer Perceval, Lord Castlereagh, and Mr. Coutts have been mentioned. The first-named is not so notable as the other two, and cannot compare with the Canning, a very fine performance, or the Duke of York, which is of great merit; but the position held by Perceval and his terribly sudden "taking off" caused a certain demand for his "effigy," and Nollekens is said to have received no fewer than fifteen orders for representations of the dead statesman, at 150 guineas each.

In connection with Lord Castlereagh's sittings, a characteristic anecdote is preserved. The weather at the time, was very wintry, and the sculptor's studio was, as usual, very indifferently warmed, so much so that Lord Castlereagh, as well as Mrs. Nollekens, who was sitting wrapped up in it, were both shivering. Nollekens went out for some more clay, whereupon his lordship rose and put some coals on the fire. "Oh, my good lord," exclaimed Mrs. Nollekens, "I don't know what Mr. Nollekens will say!" "Tell him, my good lady," replied Lord Castlereagh, "to put them into my bill!"

The bust of Thomas Coutts, the great banker, was the last which Nollekens executed. Fuseli had recommended Coutts to employ Nollekens, as being unrivalled in this direction. "Had you required a group of figures, I should have recommended Flaxman—but for a bust

give me Nollekens," said Fuseli. Smith presents us with a curious and quite Dutch-like genre picture of the sculptor's studio, on the occasion of these sittings: Mr. Coutts, aged and ill, accompanied by Mrs. Coutts, who from time to time nourished him with soup and other sustaining things, which she warmed in a silver saucepan, brought with her for the purpose, over the fire; Mrs. Nollekens in the last stage of her life, seated in her chair, her back nearly bent double and her neck so twisted that her head rested sideways against her high-backed chair; Mrs. Coutts, elaborately gowned, bustling about in attendance on Crœsus, and the old sculptor, nearly deaf, working away without intermission and hearing nothing, but still, at intervals, bawling out questions to his sitter as to the price of stocks and the state of the money market; while the latter would stop with a spoonful of soup half-way to his mouth, to give an answer which was half inaudible to the sculptor.

The picture is not a pretty one—three of the party with their feet almost in the grave, discussing money—thinking only of the gold pieces which they were so soon to leave.* Of the bust executed under these conditions, Smith thus speaks: "I must say that, as a likeness, it is certainly ridiculously severe. In my mind, it displays the distorted features of a distressed person labouring under the heavy pangs of poverty, penury or peevishness, neither of which cheerless characteristics did Mr. Coutts at any period of his life possess. Indeed, it is what I deem a Cruikshank caricature countenance."

Considering the extraordinary number of busts of the eminent men of his day, which Nollekens produced, it would be wonderful indeed if there were not some which fell short of the high level which the sculptor's general ability in this direction caused his contemporaries to expect. The remarkable thing is that, on the whole, he was so extraordinarily successful. Smith always thought

* Mrs. Nollekens died on August 17, 1817, in her seventy-fourth year. When in his eightieth year Nollekens proposed to Mrs. Zoffany, the widow of his old friend the painter, but was refused.

that Nollekens trusted more to the eyes, nose, and mouth for a likeness than to the bones of the head, and in this he was supported by the difference between the sculptor's busts of Fox (of which he modelled two) and the death-mask taken of the statesman. The busts were regarded as being very like, and yet the mask shows a much higher forehead than appears in Nollekens's representations of the face.

Whenever he could do so, the sculptor dispensed with a wig, although sometimes, as in his bust of Lord Chancellor Bathurst, for instance, he was obliged to add this ornament. He modelled Johnson's head without one, much to the good Doctor's disgust, who held that people should be thus portrayed as they are accustomed to be seen by the world ; on the other hand, Nollekens thought that a man should be presented as nature made him and not adorned by the adventitious aid of the hair-dresser.

Taken as a whole, Nollekens's busts, like the portraits of Reynolds and Gainsborough, reproduce faithfully the lineaments of the illustrious people of his day. Statesmen and politicians, soldiers and sailors, artists and literary men are to be seen in this rich gallery which the sculptor modelled with such untiring industry, and with such splendid success. His achievement in this direction was so consummate, that one need hardly trouble about his other work,* in which he was, admittedly, surpassed by such men as Bacon and Flaxman ; but a word or two must be said about some of these larger, if, in his case, less important, contributions to sculpture.

One of the most successful of these was the monumental group of Mrs. Howard, of Corby Castle, who died in giving birth to a child, and who is shown lying on her bed, with a figure, emblematic of Religion, pointing upwards. It is, no doubt, a very touching piece of work, executed with much skill and no little sense of beauty of design. "It has," says Cunningham, "been surpassed in moral

* In Westminster Abbey there are monuments to the Countess of Beverley, who died in 1812, and to Lieut.-Col. Macleod, who fell at Badajoz in the same year, from his hand.

grandeur of conception by the poetic genius of Flaxman, and in the elegance of nature by Chantrey" (Cunningham always seems to write with one eye on the living men, and with a desire to conciliate them), "but it still holds its place in public affection, and will continue to do so while human feelings are what they should be." And then he suddenly descends to the bathos of "The price was two thousand pounds."

Another of Nollekens's more ambitious works was his "Venus anointing herself." It would seem that the sculptor executed two versions of this figure; for one belonged to Lord Rockingham, while another remained in the artist's studio and was sold after his death for a few hundreds, although Nollekens always valued it at £1500. Whence the idea was taken, for this figure, is not clear. On one occasion Nollekens was asked; but he did not reply. That the work was a favourite with him is proved by his having kept it in his own possession, and also from the anecdote related by Smith, who tells how the sculptor, being greatly annoyed at an accident that had happened to one of his statues when on exhibition at Somerset House, told the secretary, F. M. Newton, who took the affair rather casually, that should the Venus be injured, "he would break every bone in his body." Although the actual execution of this work is said to have been very fine, a defect is pointed out in the fact that Venus is shown pouring incense on her head from a bottle, and at the same time is looking aside; whereas the eye should obviously aid the hand in such an act, to give the whole thing a really lifelike resemblance.

There is no doubt that much as Nollekens liked these kinds of productions, in which he probably thought he was approaching the antique, they were not really his *forte*. Indeed, although he had spent long years in Rome, he never seems quite to have absorbed the true feeling for the works of ancient art, and when he gave evidence before the Committee for the purchase of the Elgin Marbles, his remarks were both vague and banal, and compare very indifferently with the wide

learning and enthusiastic eloquence displayed, on the same occasion, by Flaxman.

But it was an age in which patrons demanded classicism, even from one who was not wholly at home in it, and we find Nollekens producing two other Venuses, one for Mr. Chamberlayne of Hampshire; the other, representing the goddess chiding Cupid, for Lord Yarborough, as well as a Diana and a Juno, for Lord Rockingham, and a Mercury, for Lord Yarborough.

Of the sculptor's sepulchral monuments, which may be seen in various parts of the country, in churches and private chapels, there are over sixty, and in many cases the prices paid for them were large; that to Mrs. Coke, of Holkham, for instance, costing no less than £2000. Among those thus commemorated by Nollekens, were the Duke of Kent, Lords Bathurst, Bessborough, Bateman, Boston, Dysart, Leigh, Loraine, Robert Manners, Sands, Spencer, and Trevor; the Duke of Dorset, Sir Charles Booth, Sir John Dashwood, Sir Thomas Penfold, Sir Septimus Robinson, and Sir Thomas Salesbury; Oliver Goldsmith, William Wyndham, the Bishop of St. Asaph, and Mr. Shipley; * General Noel and the Bishop of Worcester.† Besides this large output the sculptor produced a quantity of subsidiary works, such as the mending of antique statues, the production of chimney-pieces, &c., as well as an exquisite piece, representing a "Boy and Dolphin," at Burghley House; while the five masks on the keystones of Somerset House were copied in stone by him, from the designs of Cipriani.

Although Nollekens worked so assiduously, his life was not shortened by his exertions, and the minute Smith tells of no instance of his ever suffering from any serious illness, nor do I remember him mentioning an occasion on which the sculptor was troubled by passing indisposition. Indeed his life seems to have worn very

* He was a brother of that Shipley under whom Nollekens first learnt drawing.

† As an example of Nollekens's less ambitious memorials may be mentioned the tablet to the memory of Richard Davenport, with reversed *fasces* at the sides, and Cupids' heads and wings above, in Marlow Church. Davenport died in 1799.

gently to its close. Cunningham records seeing him for the last time in 1819, at the opening of the annual exhibition. "He was then," writes the critic, "unable to move but by the aid of his attendants; and having expressed a wish to Chantrey, whom he admired and loved, to see the exhibition of painting and sculpture, he was carried upstairs in a kind of sedan, and with his friend at his elbow, sat for a time looking round him. He then fixed his eye on some work which pleased him—muttered a few almost inaudible words—moved with his body in the direction of his object, and made a sign when he was placed in a right point of view. His power of expressing what he felt was never strong—it was less than ever now—but his good taste was in full vigour, for he caused himself to be placed before all the best paintings, and his remarks went at once to their chief merits. Chantrey afterwards said that his observations were judicious, and penetrated to the sentiment and meaning of the scenes and groups. When he was borne to his coach, he gave the persons who helped him a guinea each—put his hand to his hat, and bade farewell for ever to the Royal Academy. He was then eighty-two years old."

Nollekens was no less than seventy-nine when he exhibited his busts of Lord St. Helens, Lord Liverpool, the Duke of Newcastle, and Thomas Coutts, at the Royal Academy in 1816, and with these works his long and arduous artistic life may be said to have closed. Gradually did he give up his beloved employment. With failing strength he found it impossible to work on stone and marble; and he fell back for a time on merely modelling in clay; when even this overtaxed his strength, he again employed himself in making sketches, as he had done, with such happy results, in his early days at Rome. Then came the period when he could merely gaze at his collection of prints and curiosities, when his solitude was only broken by the visits of numerous friends, many of them fashionable people who probably came as much out of curiosity as for the object of cheering the sculptor's evening of life. At last arrived the days when he rather breathed than lived; a practically comatose

state, which finally ended on April 23, 1823, when he passed peacefully away in the presence of his old friend and long-time assistant, Goblet, and of his nurse, Mrs. Holt. Had he lived another four months he would have been eighty-six.

The funeral took place on May 1, when the sculptor's remains were followed to the grave by, among others, the carriages of the Hon. Thomas Grenville and the Duke of Wellington; the executors, Sir Willam Beechey and J. T. Smith; Francis Douce, and many more. Nollekens was buried in the graveyard of Paddington Church where a stone marks the site of his last resting-place.

As a sculptor Nollekens takes a high place in the annals of art; but like many men whose power of self-criticism is defective, he seems to have regarded that part of his achievement which was least notable, as being that on which his reputation would endure. He considered that his figures—especially his Venuses—were destined to stand, in order of merit, beside the work of the ancients, and one of these is said to have remained in his studio receiving intermittent labour from his hands for over twenty years. His busts, in which, as a matter of fact, his true greatness lay, were executed with rapidity and were probably merely regarded as stand-bys for the increase of his fortune. In these works Nollekens always aimed at a true and lifelike representation, and he invariably succeeded so well, that it is on them and on them alone that his true fame rests.

His personal character was a curious mixture of eccentricity; he was full of information, yet curiously ill-educated and deficient in those arts with which smaller men were endowed; in his capacity as a fashionable sculptor he was brought in contact with the highest in the land, but he never learned anything from them; never made the best of such opportunities; and he continued to speak as badly and write as ungrammatically as he did when a pupil at Shipley's drawing-school. He was ever more alive to the tricks of Punch and the

antics of Harlequin than to the beauties of Shakespeare, or the grace and grandeur of Milton. His tastes, except in his professional capacity, were not elevated: he loved to imitate street cries and suchlike things, and frequently indulged in these puerilities while modelling, much to his sitters' amusement. He would talk with easy familiarity with every one—from royal sitters to strangers he met in the streets.

With those whom he remembered in Italy, and even with the Royal Family, he was fond of speaking Italian, but as he had never properly mastered the language, his auditors were rather amused than enlightened by his remarks. Another of his habits was to indulge in puerile recollections in and out of season, and even such a grave signor as Lord Mansfield, had to put up with this kind of talk, while sitting to him. There was a strain of simplicity in Nollekens which must have, often enough, amused those who visited the studio in Mortimer Street; but the sculptor was anything but half-witted, as Smith seems to suggest, and he was always competent, as his biographer allows, to look after his own interests. Nor was he to be cozened out of his due reward for work done by those who sometimes tried to go back on their bargain. A case in point was that of the lady who, in the first access of grief at being left a widow, ordered the sculptor to prepare plans for a sumptuous monument to her dead husband, but afterwards sought to countermand it, when time had assuaged her sorrow. "My charge for my model will be one hundred guineas," exclaimed Nollekens, who saw the direction in which her thoughts tended; and though the lady considered the charge "enormous," she had to pay it.

But the sculptor did many acts of kindness which are all the more creditable because his nature, partly inherited, partly the result of hard early struggles, was undoubtedly parsimonious. For instance, in another case, he absolutely refused to accept money for the designs of a monument which had not been approved of, and although the sum was sent, he caused it to be applied to charity. On another occasion, finding a fellow

artist—George Richardson—in distress, he gave him twenty guineas and allowed him that sum yearly during his life. He is said to have permitted an uncle and aunt living in Paris almost to starve, but it is also shown that when his father-in-law, Mr. Sanders Welch, who had seen them there, drew his attention to their condition, he allowed them £30 a year; nor is it quite consistent with his reputed meanness that he was one day found throwing half-crowns to a number of girls dressed as Queens of the May, who were dancing before his window.

What one gathers from the pages of Smith is, that Nollekens would have been more open-handed to others, although as regarded himself he was always sparing, had it not been for the restraining hand of Mrs. Nollekens, about whose parsimony and marital jealousy many anecdotes leave us in no doubt.

Although never notable as a dandy, in days when men of all classes, except the lowest, dressed picturesquely and often elaborately, in his early days Nollekens took some care over his apparel; but in later life he lost any pride he may have had in his personal appearance, and dressed shabbily; while personal cleanliness was never one of his marked characteristics.

Careless of the opinions of others, he would let men like Barry and Fuseli laugh and sneer at him to their hearts' content, without attempting any reprisals; but, on occasion, as we have seen, he could retort vigorously enough, and Wolcot and Hone were not likely to forget the verbal castigation he administered to them.

He held certain very pronounced views, among them being his absolute refusal ever to model a bust of a Nonconformist minister, and nothing would induce him to accede to several requests he received to make one of John Wesley. On the other hand, it has never been satisfactorily shown that Nollekens was a strict observer of the tenets of his own—the Roman Catholic—faith, although it is known that he once threw into the fire a set of erotic prints, on his confessor refusing him absolution until he had done so.

Although he is said to have been wild in his Roman days, in later life he never seems to have really given Mrs. Nollekens cause for her not infrequent outbursts of jealousy, except in emphasising too markedly his admiration for the beauties of some of his professional models.

He was fond of collecting (accumulating would perhaps be a better word) old silver, of a quantity of which he was once robbed by thieves who, in their haste, left a bank-book, containing a considerable number of notes, behind them; prints; and antique gems, although he does not seem to have exercised much discrimination in their acquisition, and to have little understood their intrinsic merits. He, however, appreciated the engraved reproductions of Sir Joshua's pictures, of which he possessed a large and fine collection, and was always delighted when he could add to their number.

His parsimony has been so much insisted on, largely through Smith's ferret-like investigations into the sculptor's private life, that it has almost become proverbial. The fact is he was, like many men who have been obliged in early life to count every penny and exercise constant restraint over their expenditure, never able to rid himself of the incubus of saving, even when saving became not only unnecessary, but actually reprehensible. But after all, this parsimony was generally exercised in his own affairs (and we know that Mrs. Nollekens did not find it distasteful), and was therefore his own personal matter. There are plenty of evidences, even Smith gives some, to which I have already referred, to show that he could be, and was, generous to others. Thus he one day gave his barber a guinea to buy a new hat because a thief had stolen one from the poor man; on another occasion he presented the same person with a pound-note to buy himself some shirts. He gave £25 to the fund raised for the widows and orphans of those who fell at Waterloo; and once when Turner asked him for a guinea for the Artists' Benevolent Fund, he gave him thirty! Such instances might be multiplied; and it is recorded that, during his last sickness, when unable

to sleep, he would wake up his nurse and ask her if there was any one he could do anything for, and on her mentioning a likely case, he would never forget it, and some poor creature was often thus made happy by his generosity.

His will, too, showed that he forgot none of his poorer friends, and although he left no less than £200,000, the document is full of legacies to all and sundry, which rather disposes of the suggestion that when he once said he would give £30,000 for the Elgin Marbles, he did it in a spirit of boastfulness, as, had he wished to be remembered in this way, he might have left the vast sum he died possessed of towards something which would have perpetuated his name, instead of dividing it between his friends Francis Palmer and Francis Douce, and others. Six thousand was apportioned towards a number of smaller bequests; a hundred each went to his assistants Gahagan, Goblet, and Lupton; £50 a year to his nurse, &c.; and there were fourteen codicils, in all of which he made further bequests to friends, although in a few cases he revoked legacies previously left by the will itself.

There was a good deal of trouble over the document, which was almost as confused as was that of Turner; but although several claimants were put forward, certain relations living abroad among them, and notwithstanding Smith's disappointment at only receiving £100 as executor, and his feverish attempts to find a later will, ingenuously stated in his book, Nollekens's wishes were all carried out, and so, as in his life he created so much antagonism by his plain speaking and frugal living, in his death he was destined to raise up much ill-feeling and annoyance — a fate which overtakes most men who leave large estates, and fail to bequeath them to those who think, rightly or wrongly, that they have a better claim to the dead man's property than any one else.

If the generosity of Nollekens in such matters could be questioned by certain people, his expressed generosity towards his contemporary rivals, in the art of sculpture, has never been impugned. "Mighty fine, mighty

fine," he would exclaim on being shown some example of a sculptor's skill; "he's a clever fellow who has done this, and I must go and tell him so." "Go to Chantrey; he's the man for a *busto!* He'll make a good *busto* of you; I always recommend him," he frequently remarked on being himself asked to model a head; and on one occasion he insisted on one of his own busts being removed from a prominent place in the exhibition, to make way for one of Horne Tooke by Chantrey, then a young and not widely known man; while he is known to have helped struggling artists by gifts of marble, saying, "It encourages more than money does." Smith may be relied upon to give us a good idea of Nollekens's outer man, and here is his pen-portrait:

"His figure was short, his head big, and it appeared much increased by a large-crowned hat, of which kind he was very fond; but his dress-hat, which he always sported when he went to Court or to the Academy dinners, was nearly flat, and he brought it from Rome. His neck was short, his shoulders narrow, his body too large, particularly in the front lower part, which resembled that of Tenducci, and many other falsetto singers; he was bow-legged, and hook-nosed—indeed, his leg was somewhat like his nose, which resembled the rudder of an Antwerp packet-boat—his lips were rather thin, but between his brows there was great evidence of study. He was very fond of his ruffles, and continued to wear them long after they had become unfashionable—indeed, until they were worn out. A drab was his favourite colour, and his suit was generally made from the same piece, though now and then he would treat himself with a striped Manchester waistcoat, of one of which he was so fond that he sat to Abbott for his portrait in it . . . where he is represented leaning on his bust of Fox, which brought him more notice than any other of his productions. His dress stockings were also rather remarkable, being ornamented with blue and white stripes. . . ."

The portrait which John Jackson painted of Nollekens, if studied together with this description, will give us

a good idea of the sculptor's appearance during the later years of his life; while Chantrey's bust, carved in 1816,* shows clearly the well-formed long head and rather Wellingtonian profile which, from a perusal of Smith's words or a study of Jackson's picture, one would not gather that Nollekens possessed.

Nollekens had no children, and whenever the sculptor was asked by a stranger, in the presence of Mrs. Nollekens, whether he had any family, the lady, pointing to the innumerable figures and busts which crowded his studio, would exclaim, "A very great family, sir. All these are Mr. Nollekens's children."

* There is also one by Dance, now in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House.

JOHN BACON

CHAPTER IX

JOHN BACON

Of all the British sculptors Bacon was perhaps the one who best combined in himself those characteristics which have always appealed more or less forcibly to the British public. As an artist he seldom if ever attempted to work above the heads of the people ; he made his meaning so plain to the most ordinary intelligence that his output was from the first regarded with that satisfaction with which people receive anything they can readily understand, and which does not require any deep mental exercise for its appreciation. He addressed himself to the plain man, and the plain man comprehended him and rejoiced exceedingly. No recondite knowledge of the classics was necessary for the study of his achievement, as it frequently was for that of Flaxman ; no subtle recognition of abstruse questions of form or line was required, as it was, sometimes, in the case of Banks or Nollekens. Bacon's works spoke for themselves ; they bore their interpretation obviously to the minds of all men, and where allegory was introduced, its difficulties were overcome by such subtle aids to interpretation as at once indicated the skill of the artist, and saved the spectator from having recourse to more than the most superficial of the reasoning faculties. Added to this technical dexterity in appealing to his contemporaries, Bacon was, in many essentials of his art, a fine sculptor ; and if his success arose rather from his power of execution than from an exhibition of the results of deep thought in his works, it achieved in simple directness what it might never have done, had its springs been grounded in deeper knowledge or more finished education. Another reason may be added to these to account for Bacon's

popularity: he was a man whose nature was essentially religious, and one who took no small pains to make this apparent to the public, and in the form of fables and epitaphs and even sermons he indicated to all and sundry his devoutness and his uprightness of life. At a period when at least the outward forms o such things were held in high account, when George III. and Queen Charlotte set the pattern of morality, such a proof of being among the elect had its commercial value, if it may be thus flippantly characterised, and Bacon seems to have benefited almost as largely by these private characteristics as he did by his undoubted skill as an artist. In a word, he was a popular sculptor, and his name remains one of the most important among those who worked in this country during the later years of the eighteenth and the earlier portion of the nineteenth centuries.

John Bacon was born in Southwark on November 24, 1740, five years later than Banks, and but three years later than Nollekens, so that these three men may be regarded as contemporary artists, although Nollekens outlived Bacon by no less than twenty-four years. It is a curious fact that all three pursued different phases of their art (although they each, at times, overlapped, as it were, the others), Banks being chiefly concerned with statues, Nollekens with busts, and Bacon with monuments, so that they may be said to have resumed in themselves the complete circle of the sculptor's achievements, during their day.

Notwithstanding that Bacon came of a family of old standing, and one possessing considerable property in Somersetshire, his early years were passed in surroundings little removed from poverty, his father, Thomas Bacon, having come to London and set up as a cloth-worker, a calling he pursued with little success. Indeed, his son, even when but a child, was pressed into a sort of family apprenticeship and aided his father, as well as he could, in keeping the home together. It can be well understood that, under such circumstances, young Bacon's chance of education was a small one, and therefore whatever capacity he afterwards evinced in this direction—and we

know he was fond of composition, like many ill-educated people—was due to his unaided attempts to teach himself, in which he was not wholly unsuccessful; although in certain matters more important than book-learning, or the production of fables and sermons, he was, also like many uneducated men, often sadly to seek; for instance, a sense of humour and a sense of proportion never seem to have been his strong points.

It is so customary, by the light of later events, to assert that the youth of successful men was stirred by the desire for fame in the direction in which they afterwards achieved it, that we shall not be unprepared to find that young Bacon's childhood was visited by undefined longings and aspirations towards art, although in his case they came very near to being unfulfilled by reason of two accidents, in one of which he was nearly drowned in a soap-boiler's pit, and in another, was almost killed by falling beneath a heavily loaded cart. One thing does seem certain, and that is that with advancing years he realised that the cloth-workers' trade was uncongenial to him, although he seems to have fought for a time against the desire to better his condition with the aid of a philosophy rather in advance of his years. When, however, he had reached the age of fourteen, which, among those who struggle for existence, is a far more mature period than with youths brought up amid happier conditions, he determined to do something to emancipate himself, and by dint of perseverance got apprenticed to Crispe of Bow Churchyard, then well known as a manufacturer of the porcelain which goes by the name of Bow.

This new condition of life had its obvious advantages over that on which Bacon now turned his back, but it also had its drawbacks; it carried him a few steps nearer art, but it prevented him from enjoying an early training in that direction of it which he was eventually to follow, at a period, too, when such a novitiate would have been particularly helpful. His admirers said that the time spent in Crispe's workshops did him good, his detractors asserted that it left its mark for the worse on his subsequent

career; one thing it certainly did, and that was it enabled young Bacon to help his struggling father in a better way than would have been the case had he continued to work with him, or had he applied himself to art study. Indirectly, too, it did make for his advancement as an artist, for Cunningham tells us how "It was the practice of sculptors in those days to send their sketches, and small clay models, to the pottery furnace to be burnt, and these young Bacon examined with a curious eye, and a desire to imitate what he could not fail to see were superior to the groups and figures manufactured by his master. The sight of these works stimulated his ambition, he strove to model in the same style, and gave all his leisure hours to the fascination of his new pursuit." In a word, it would seem that his ambition to be a sculptor was caused by what he saw at Crispe's, and not that an earlier visitation of this ambition urged him to become one of Crispe's pupils.

Once awakened, however, Bacon's desire for fame in this direction henceforth knew no slumbering. Every moment of his leisure was occupied in perfecting himself, as well as might be, in the art, and when he had reached the age of nineteen, being then still one of Crispe's workmen, he sent in "a model in clay" to the Society of Arts, and much to his elation, for he had been uncertain of his own powers of judgment, he received a premium of ten guineas. It appears that the subject he had chosen was a representation of "Peace," and that it took the form of a small figure executed after the antique.

This first success was followed by others, and in all he was awarded over £200 for eight figures at intervals till the year 1776; once receiving as much as fifty guineas for a piece representing "The Ocean."

Most of these were apparently produced while Bacon was still employed by Crispe, but in process of time, he left the Bow manufactory, to be exact in 1762, and we next find him working in Coade's Artificial Stone Manufactory at Lambeth,* soon after this venture was started

* *See* an interesting notice about this manufactory, and the Coade family, in *Notes and Queries* for May 21, 1910.

in 1769. Bacon is said to have made some experiments in artificial stone figures on his own account, while still with Crispe, and the inauguration of a special centre for the production of such things would, therefore, obviously attract him. Nor did he let the grass grow beneath his feet. We hear of him as being soon in great favour with Coade, who probably realised that he had a valuable asset in the young man; indeed, Redgrave says that "By his art he was the means of restoring Coade's manufacture, then falling into disuse," and by 1784, Nichols, who wrote a history of Lambeth, was able to state in that work that "here (at Coade's manufactory) are many statues which are allowed by the best judges to be masterpieces of art, from the models of *that celebrated artist, John Bacon.*"

It would appear that during the period Bacon passed in Coade's service, he was accustomed to work at sculpture on his own account, and he continued to send examples of his skill to the Society of Arts and to receive, from time to time, the premiums which that body presented to successful competitors. One of these specimens made some noise even beyond the portals of the Society's rooms. This was a large head of Ossian, whose so-called poems, at this time put forth by Macpherson, were drawing attention to a hitherto unknown name. The head was eventually placed over the entrance to Coade's premises, where it attracted no little notice from the many who were accustomed to visit the manufactory, and thus did something to extend Bacon's growing fame.

In 1768 the Royal Academy was founded, and the sculptor, who was then twenty-eight, lost no time in becoming a student there, having for his companions Banks and Nollekens, among others. It may well be supposed what an effect this new school had on Bacon. For the first time he was able to study the art under proper conditions, surrounded by examples of the best antique models and under the direction of men who had themselves examined these things in Greece and Italy. Nor did the relatively advanced age at which he became

a student militate against the advantages he was able to enjoy. He was always an earnest and diligent seeker after knowledge; a quiet and sober young man who was more likely to realise the advantage of his opportunities than he probably would have done had he entered the Academy schools at an earlier age; and he made the most of his chances. So successful, indeed, was he that in the year after he had entered, he received at the hands of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the first gold medal for sculpture ever presented by the Royal Academy. He took for his subject "Æneas carrying away Anchises from Troy," and executed this in small relief with figures twenty inches high. Cunningham supposes that Banks was one of the unsuccessful competitors on this occasion, and that one or both of the renderings of the same subject, which he is known to have executed, were those which he sent in.

Bacon followed up this success by producing a statue of Mars which may be said to have been the turning-point of his career, for not only did it attract the attention of the Archbishop of York, which was to lead to so many ecclesiastical commissions, at a later date, but it secured Bacon's election as an A.R.A. in 1770, as well as a gold medal from the Society of Arts; while Benjamin West, on seeing it, is said to have remarked, "If this is his first essay, what will this man be when he arrives at maturity?" The reason for this consensus of praise is rather to be looked for in the fact that sculpture at this time was only just beginning to emerge from a long period of inactivity and mediocrity, than because Bacon's production was, when compared with really great works, of any particular merit, beyond being correct in outline and proportion and based on those academic lines which were then regarded as being the last word on the art of sculpture. But the fact remains that Bacon had here done better, in the eyes of his artistic contemporaries, than had any other of the sculptors who were then working in this country. An anecdote has survived in connection with this work. While the model was in progress, owing to the clay being badly kneaded,

the figure "settled," and in consequence the lower limbs became shrunk out of proportion. A messenger coming into Bacon's studio and seeing the work, in this state, remarked, "What a fine fellow; and with such short thighs too!" Bacon, thereupon, having his attention drawn to what had happened, set to work to remodel the figure.

As a companion to the Mars, the sculptor executed a figure of Venus; and he presented the two statues to the Society of Arts, from which he had received so much help and encouragement. The gift shows that Bacon recognised this, and the letter he sent to the Society on its acceptance of his gift, contains the following passage which further exhibits his gratitude: "The honour you have done me in your acceptance of my statues of Mars and Venus, affords me an opportunity which I gladly embrace of acknowledging the many obligations I owe to the Society. It was your approbation which stimulated, and your encouragement which enabled me to pursue those studies which a disadvantageous situation had otherwise made difficult, if not impossible. Believe me, gentlemen, I never think of the Society without gratitude and without the highest idea of the principles on which it is formed; and which justly place it among the institutions that do honour to human nature, raise the glory of a nation and promote the general good of mankind."

A willingness to recognise and acknowledge his obligations was always a characteristic of Bacon, and there is no doubt that by so doing he laid the foundations of many further favours which he was to receive from those who had already befriended him.

From the making of models to the carving of marble was but a step, and although a step attended with difficulty, the sculptor's perseverance and determination to overcome this part of his labours, seems to have triumphed to some extent, even before he had become a student at the Royal Academy.

While still working with Coade, he had a small studio in the East End, but as his fame began to spread and

commissions to come in, he moved to a more convenient spot, and having acquired some premises in Wardour Street, he converted them into a workshop, although it could hardly have been a convenient one, for we are told that it was half above and half below ground. Apparently it was at this time that he terminated his connection with Coade and set up for himself entirely as a sculptor.

His first patron (other than the Society of Arts, which may, to some extent, be regarded as his earliest) was Dr. Markham, afterwards Archbishop of York. He had already seen Bacon's figures of Mars and Venus, and when, therefore, he was looking out for some one to execute a bust of George III. for Christ Church, Oxford, he bethought him of our sculptor, and having discovered his whereabouts, paid him a visit, and asked him whether he was prepared to carve a bust of the king. Bacon replied that he would be delighted if his Majesty would condescend to sit to him. "I will manage that," replied Markham, and so quickly did he do so, that very shortly afterwards Bacon received a command to attend at Buckingham House in order to commence the work. The sculptor's tact and manner pleased the king, who, during the first sitting, asked him if he had studied in Rome or learnt his art outside the British dominions; and on hearing that he had never been out of England, remarked, "I am glad of it, I am glad of it; you will be the greater honour to us." Nor was the king less pleased with the work than with its producer, and when it was completed he ordered a replica to be sent to the University of Göttingen; while later, a third copy was executed by Bacon for George IV., and a fourth, for the Society of Antiquaries.

In 1774, Bacon married a Miss Wade, with whom he had been acquainted for some years, and about the same time removed to more commodious premises in Newman Street. There is a story connected with this change of domicile which may be given, although I cannot authenticate it. It is said that a builder named Johnson who had long been acquainted with Bacon, and had

followed his artistic progress with interest and pleasure, caused a large studio fitted with every requisite, to be prepared in Newman Street, and, when all things were ready, called on the sculptor, described the premises, and told him to go and occupy them. "But," replied Bacon, "I can't afford to take such a place." "I'll manage that," said his benefactor; "you remove to Newman Street and I shall not look for the money I have laid out until you are well able to repay me." It is said that at a later period the builder, having turned banker, experienced a reverse of fortune and a run on his bank being apprehended, Bacon came forward with forty thousand pounds, which he paid into the bank and saved it from ruin. Cunningham gives this story while questioning its accuracy, but Cecil, who wrote a rather foolish life of the sculptor, does not mention it, although it is just one of those tales which had he heard of, we may be sure he would have been delighted to repeat.

The royal patronage which Bacon was able to secure so early in his career was of inestimable benefit to him, and he was soon busily engaged in producing work for all sorts of influential people and corporate bodies. Among the former was the Duke of Richmond, always a great patron of sculpture, as we have seen in the chapter on Wilton, and for him, he executed a number of marble figures which were placed at Goodwood; among the latter were the Governors of Guy's Hospital, for whom he executed the statue of their founder, which stands in the chapel * of the hospital, and the Corporation of London, for whom he produced the monument of Lord Chatham, standing in the Guildhall.

Bacon had been steadily improving in his art, and the Chatham showed how far he had advanced since he modelled his head of Ossian or his figure of Mars.† When it was set up it was declared to be "magnificent," and crowds went to the City to gaze on

* Scheemakers' statue in bronze, erected in February 1734, is in the forecourt of the hospital.

† Although Lord Yarborough was so pleased with the latter that he commissioned Bacon to make a copy of it in marble.

it; while Cowper thus referred to it in the following lines:

> . . . Bacon there
> Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
> And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips;
> Nor does the chisel occupy alone
> The powers of sculpture, but the style as much.

The work is indeed imposing, not merely owing to the figure of the great statesman which occupies the central portion, but also on account of the emblematic renderings of Commerce and Manufacture, which are represented pouring the plenty of the earth into the lap of Britannia. There is a florid kind of picturesqueness about the whole thing which appealed to the period, and there is present that "obviousness" with which Bacon gained the suffrages of his time, and secured a popularity that was denied to subtler artists.

Besides these productions, Bacon was now fully employed, and by the year 1780 was probably the busiest sculptor in England. He had become a full member of the Royal Academy in 1778; his sobriety of life, coupled with his early employment by Dr. Markham, had caused him to be a *persona grata* among the clergy; his royal commission had made him fashionable with the Court and the "nobility and gentry," as the phrase ran, and when the question arose as to who should produce any of those large and ambitious monuments which may be seen in so many of our cathedrals and churches and elsewhere, Bacon was, oftener than not, the man applied to; just as to Nollekens went those who wanted busts of their friends or illustrious contemporaries. The large monument to Lord Halifax (1783) and that to Lord Chatham,* in Westminster Abbey, are by Bacon; the statues of John Howard and Dr. Johnson in St. Paul's, the statue of Blackstone at All Souls', Oxford, and that of Henry VI. at Eton are among the other examples of his art; while Londoners have always a specimen before

* This is no less than thirty-three feet high, and cost £6000. Bacon wrote the inscription on it, which caused George III. to remark, "Now, Bacon, mind you don't turn author; stick to your chisel."

them in the recumbent figure (in bronze) of "The Thames," at Somerset House.

Indeed his success was quite phenomenal, and out of sixteen public competitions he was only once unsuccessful. Under such circumstances, considering human nature, it is not to be wondered at, perhaps, that Bacon should have been less popular among his brother artists than he was with the general public. A man who carried all before him; one who made rather a stock-in-trade of humility; who, the older and richer he became, became also the more humble; who was known to have had no classic training, might well have been regarded with mixed feelings by his artistic contemporaries, but when such a man departed from the usual etiquette of his profession, in order to obtain commissions, one can readily understand that murmurs were heard protesting against such methods. One of these occurred in connection with the statue of Lord Chatham, which the Government determined to erect in Westminster Abbey, on the death of that great man. Bacon entered for the competition, but instead of allowing the matter to take its normal course, he determined to make assurance doubly sure, and having executed a model for the intended statue, he besought an audience of the king. His Majesty was pleased with the design—it represented Chatham extending the British dominions over the rest of the earth, aided in this pious work by Prudence and Fortitude—and at parting exclaimed, "Bacon, you shall make Chatham's monument, and no one else shall." Such a work was entirely in Bacon's way, he could have executed it better than any one else at that time, and he would, in any case, not improbably have been given the commission in the ordinary course; but the manner in which it was secured made not only the Royal Academy as a body, angry, but individual members, such as Banks, who also meant to compete, furious. However there was no gainsaying the royal edict, and Bacon was duly chosen to execute the work.

One can realise that the sculptor lacked tact, in the larger sense of the word, even if, as is proved, he could

simulate it in his personal dealings with his patrons and those whom he wished to convert into patrons; but a proposal he not long after made to the Government, viz., that he should execute all the national monuments at so much a head, allowing a percentage below the price usually paid by Parliament, proves him to have lacked also a sense of humour almost inconceivable in one who had come in contact with all sorts and conditions of men.

When Fuseli heard of this preposterous proposal his contempt knew no bounds: "Spirit of Phidias," he exclaimed, "*Bacon* is to do all the *stone work* for the Navy and Army—they ought also to give him the contract for *hams* and *pork*." And when the Government politely declined to enter into the suggested agreement, some one remarked, "They have rebuked our presumptuous potter. Only to think of a man without poetic feeling, or heroic thought, or knowledge of the antique, offering to commemorate our heroes!—why he is not fit to act as their *undertaker*."

There is no doubt that the Chatham monument is an essentially fine piece of work within its limits. It is grand and majestic, but those who seek for restraint and simplicity will hardly find it in the somewhat florid outlines of Bacon's figures. Cecil, the biographer of the sculptor, speaks of it with that effusive hyperbole which he exhibits throughout his little book.

"It may, perhaps, be produced," he writes, "as an instance not only that true genius is the growth of the British isle; but that it may be fully ripened in it, unassisted by foreign aid." It is true that Bacon lay under no obligations to the great foreign schools of sculpture, but it is not the less true that only partiality would describe this example of his achievement, as a work of genius.

Connected with this monument is one of those anecdotes which illustrate what Cunningham says of Bacon: that he was wont to assure his friends "that he was particularly grateful to all who told him of his faults and defects." One day as he stood before the work, he was addressed by a stranger who remarked, "That monument to Chatham, sir, is admirable upon the whole, but it has

great defects." "I should feel obliged, sir," replied Bacon, "if you would kindly point them out to me." "Why here! and there! and there!—don't you see? Bad, very bad," at the same time prodding the offending parts with his stick. "But tell me, please, your reasons for thinking these portions so bad," said the sculptor. "I have already done so to Bacon himself, sir, so I shall not repeat them to you—I pointed out other defects, too, while the work was in progress, but he would not be convinced," was the amazing reply. "What, then you know Bacon personally?" "Oh, yes, sir, I have been intimate with him for many years; a clever man, sir, but obstinate"; to which the sculptor merely replied, "Were Bacon here now, he would not like to hear so old a friend speaking of his work so adversely," and he turned on his heel, leaving the man, who was an utter stranger, unaware of his identity.

On another occasion when he was employed in adding some touches to the same monument, a clergyman passing by on his way to deliver a sermon in the Abbey, stopped and remarked, "Take care what you are doing; you work for eternity." When the discourse was ended, Bacon went up to him and said, "Take care what you do; you work for eternity."

A third story was one which Bacon himself was fond of telling, in connection with the commission he received to execute the statue of Henry VI. for Eton. He was, one day, visited by a clergyman who had all the appearance of being in greatly distressed circumstances. The stranger entered the studio and seated himself without, for a time, saying a word; presently, however, he remarked, "Pray, Mr. Bacon, were you ever in Rome?" "No," replied the sculptor. "Or at Wilton to see the antiques?" "No." "But you have, of course, been in Westminster Abbey, sir?" "Why, yes, sir, very often." "Well, I will walk through your rooms, and look at your work," said the stranger, and doing so, exclaimed at intervals, "Well—indeed—very good, excellent. And all produced, without your having been abroad, you say? Well, sir, all I can tell you is that you

have no need to go. Now, if you are willing, you shall make a bust of Henry VI.; and here is half the price," and he then left. The bust having been duly carved and delivered, Bacon received a letter praising the work and enclosing the remainder of the price. Some weeks later, however, the stranger again visited the studio. "Your bust has but one fault, sir," he began, "and that is—it ought to have been carried down to the feet—in short it should have been a statue, and I must have one for Eton College. I had put down a sum in my will for this purpose, but, on consideration, I should like to see it completed during my lifetime, and I would commission you to begin it at once, only you are accustomed to have half the price paid down on beginning a work, and I cannot very well manage this, although I could pay you £100 in advance, I think." "Don't let that trouble you," replied Bacon; "I will leave you to pay when convenient, and will at once set to work on the design for such a statue as you desire." Whereupon this eccentric patron demurred a little, first brought out £100, then £200, from his pocket, and finally the full amount of the usual half price, £250, remarking as he did so, "There, that's my way—make the statue, and earn the other half."

Among other work which Bacon was commissioned to execute about this period, may be mentioned his monument to Major Pierson, who was killed while defending Jersey from the French, an incident commemorated also by Copley in the well-known picture depicting the circumstance; the monument to Mrs. Draper—Sterne's Eliza—which may be seen in Bristol Cathedral; a statue of Venus; and a colossal head of Jupiter; while his recumbent figure of Father Thames, for Somerset House, was exhibited at the Royal Academy about the same time. This was executed in bronze—a medium in which the sculptor had his own special method of dealing. He was accustomed to cast the figure in a number of small pieces and then to join them together by fusing. The obvious advantage of this process was that only small moulds were required, and that if a smelting failed, only a relatively small portion of the work suffered. On the

other hand the proportions were hardly able to be so well preserved, by this method, as if the figure had been cast in one or two portions, as was the later, and on the whole the better process followed by such men as Chantrey and Westmacott for instance. But the want of success of Bacon's Thames can hardly be traced to the sculptor's particular way of producing the finished bronze. It is, in itself, heavy and uninspired, and if we have become used to it, and therefore fail at once to see its short-comings, it is because use reconciles, and for little other reason. When it was first shown, Queen Charlotte stood before it, and remarked to the sculptor, "Why did you make so frightful a figure?" to which Bacon, who seems always to have had a ready answer on his lips, replied, "Art, madam, cannot always effect what is ever within the reach of nature—the union of beauty and majesty."

In 1785, he produced one of his best works. This was the almost famous statue of Doctor Johnson which is now in St. Paul's. The great Doctor is represented standing wrapt in profound contemplation, and grasping a scroll; he is garbed in a large robe which hangs around him, but still reveals his burly form, leaving his neck, arms, and feet bare. There is something as sturdy and solid in this fine statue, as there was in the character of the great man it depicts. If the likeness to Johnson, as we know him in the portraits of Reynolds, is not absolutely striking, it is obvious enough to save us from mistaking the figure for that of any one else, and Bacon seems here to have entered into the *spirit* of the original in a quite remarkable way. He has, too, wisely refrained from adding any of those adventitious adornments with which it was then so largely the fashion to decorate statues and monuments, as a sort of first aid to identification; such things as are present, for instance, in the John Howard, which Bacon produced ten years later (1795), and which stands opposite Johnson at the entrance to the choir. Concerning these two statues, the story is told, that a foreigner seeing Johnson with his scroll and Howard holding the key of one of those prisons wherein his gentle spirit penetrated so often, mistook them for St. Peter and St. Paul! Howard

is shown treading under foot the chains and fetters which it was his life-work to ease if not to loose entirely, and in one hand he holds a plan of his suggested improvements in jails, and in the other the key. It is a fine statue and one only less admirable than that which it faces in the cathedral.

Two years before the Johnson had been executed, Bacon received a heavy blow by the death of his wife, which occurred in the February of 1783, at the early age of forty-two; she had been married but ten years, and left behind her five children. The sculptor, however, consoled himself in the autumn of the same year, by marrying a second time—on this occasion a Miss Martha Holland.

As he advanced in years, Bacon's industry continued unabated, and as he proceeded so he improved; indeed he was doing better and better to the end of his life; a proof of this, being the fact that the Howard just referred to was executed only four years before his death. Among the more important of his monumental works may be mentioned the memorials to Lady Millar, Lord Heathfield, Sir George Pocock (1796), one of Bacon's most successful works, Samuel Whitbread, the poets Gray and Mason, in Westminster Abbey; Brigadier Hope (1793), Lord Normanton, and Judge Morton. In nearly all of these, Bacon's love of producing large and complex works is evident; they mostly exhibit those attributes which help the spectator to estimate the character and achievement of the various people represented. Around Lord Halifax's bust are figures depicting the triumph of Truth and the rewards of political service; in Sir George Pocock's we at once realise that it was on the ocean that the commemorated one signalised himself, for we see Britannia shaking a thunderbolt over the waves; Poetry weeps its loss over Mason, although in truth she hardly had great cause to grieve the stroke that stayed his pen; while in the memorial to Brigadier Hope, there is a beautiful female figure stretched in an agony of grief, over the tomb, which is quite admirable. One can, indeed, see the methods which Bacon employed by studying his monuments. He had a sort of stock-in-trade of memorial

emblems which he used with fine effect certainly, but which are sometimes a little too obvious to our present way of thinking; but the sculptor was labouring for his own times, and need not be blamed if he did not work for a posterity whose ideas he could hardly be expected to anticipate. "What am I in the sight of God but an humble cutter of stone?" he once exclaimed, in one of those accesses of humility which became with him more frequent as his worldly affairs prospered, and which are among the least admirable of his characteristics. He may have been a humble cutter of stone, but he was a successful one, and he carried on his work on business lines, curiously illustrated by the following anecdote. On one occasion, an order for a monument was left at his studio during his absence. On his return his foreman mentioned it to him. "Well, is it to be in memory of a private gentleman?—and what price was proposed?" "Three hundred pounds, sir," replied the man. "Three hundred pounds—a small bas-relief will do—was he a benevolent man? You asked that, I hope." "Yes, sir—he was a benevolent man—he always gave sixpence, they said, to the old woman who opened his pew door on Sundays." "That will do—that will do," replied Bacon, "we must have recourse to our old friend the Pelican."

One need not, of course, assume too much from such a slight story, but it is sufficient to indicate the principle on which the sculptor was accustomed to work. He had his Britannia and his warlike trophies, for warriors; for virtue, there was a large field to choose from: Prudence, Truth, Benevolence, and the rest; for generosity, his "old friend" the Pelican! Nor must he be blamed for such harmless "emblems." It was the kind of thing his patrons expected, and if he was not on the side of the angels, in giving the world what it wanted, he was certainly on the side of the money-bags. His monument to the Earl of Tracton (in Ireland), and those to Lord Rodney and the Earl and Countess of Effingham and Dr. Anderson (in Jamaica), and particularly that to Lord Cornwallis at Calcutta, are but further exemplifications of the principle which guided him in such matters.

He knew that large and elaborate monuments paid better than those smaller ones on which just as much, if not more, work was required; and he can hardly be blamed for paying attention chiefly to such. He recognised, too, that he was, at this period, practically alone in his ability to deal with such things, and so he was content to leave classical subjects to Flaxman, and busts * to Nollekens.

Bacon's merits, as a sculptor, were many and incontestable. He possessed a kind of picturesque ability and with it he informed nearly everything to which he set his hand. As has been said, "he infused more good English sense into his sculpture than any preceding artist"; and if his genius was not of that high order which produces individual masterpieces, he possessed the more sober talent which saved him from rarely falling below a uniform level of excellence. An observant critic of our own day, thus sums up Bacon's claims to be considered one of the foremost sculptors which the British school has produced. "Bacon was the first English sculptor to get free from the tradition of Roubiliac, with his boisterous lights and shades, his excessive under-cutting, and his dependence upon exaggerated emphasis of style. His forms are far more generous than even those of Wilton, and he bases his effects upon a broader system of illumination. In looking at a successful monument by Bacon, we find evidences of an eye accustomed to consider the general superficies of a work of art, not the picturesqueness of its details. He was well fitted by his long and conscientious training, and by the sobriety of his temperament, to excel in the art of monumental sculpture. His love of nature and for truth was great; his anatomical science, though more superficial than that of Wilton, was considerable, and he was exceedingly skilful in all the technical processes of his art."

Although he was, in a sense, the most thoroughly British sculptor who has worked in this country, the influence of Italy, and perhaps still more of France, is observable in

* There is, however, a very finely executed bust entitled "Sickness," by Bacon, which he presented to the Royal Academy in 1778.

much of his output ; but none of those Greek ideals which have proved a source of inspiration to so many, seem to have touched him, and, in consequence, those to whom such a tradition is the all in all of sculpture, have been apt to look somewhat askance at his achievement, not because it lacks excellence when judged on a broad and cosmopolitan basis, but because that excellence seems to trace no direct descent from Hellenic forebears.

His contemporaries, on more than one occasion, accused Bacon of having no knowledge whatever of the antique ; but if such was the case, it is a fact that he refuted the charge, by producing a work which his brother Royal Academicians actually mistook for an ancient piece of sculpture !

Towards the improvement of his art, Bacon invented a pointing instrument of a kind far superior to the old pointing compasses which had hitherto obtained. Houdin, the great French sculptor, when in this country saw this instrument, and so greatly admired it that Bacon made him a present of one. Subsequently a gentleman who had seen the invention in Houdin's studio in Paris called on Bacon, and noticing that he also possessed one, remarked, " So you have got one of Houdin's pointing instruments." Houdin had passed it off as one of his own inventions !

In private life Bacon was a sober and industrious man, perhaps a little too much given to the assertion of humility, and too ready to regard himself as a reformer of morals, to which end he wrote epitaphs, which may be regarded as a part of his business, and attempted to preach, which cannot, by the widest extension, be said to have had anything to do with it. He was accustomed to indite fables also, in which his zest for proselytising found a further scope. Indeed in this direction there was an oily, Chadband-like character about him which is hardly pleasing, especially when, as we know, a businesslike capacity and an eye to the main chance went hand in hand with it. He made a large amount of money, leaving no less than £60,000, but he is not known to have been very free—except with advice. Cunningham, in

his short memoir of Bacon, is not uniformly fair to him, but what he says with regard to such characteristics as the sculptor exhibited, is essentially true: "The man who is readier with a sermon than a sixpence—who is so pious himself that he is afraid of encouraging profligacy by giving alms to beggars of suspicious morality—who stints his table lest excess of creature comforts should beget pride and lasciviousness in his household, and is austere and harsh to his dependents lest by mildness he might make them forget they are servants, may be a very respectable sort of person and of good repute with the world, yet he is but an indifferent Christian, let his attendance at church or meeting-house be as punctual as it may." If such remarks as applied to Bacon in particular, may err on the side of severity, there yet seems to have been in his character a sufficient substratum on which to rest them with reason. But such matters need not concern us here; we have merely to remember that Bacon was an industrious worker who succeeded in establishing his name as that of one of England's foremost sculptors, and who by a careful and economical life, left his wife and children amply provided for.

He died rather suddenly, from internal inflammation, at his house in Newman Street, on August 6, 1799. He was buried under the north gallery of Whitfield's Chapel, Tottenham Court Road, where a tablet bearing his name exhibits the following inscription which he had himself, in one of his fits of epitaph-making, written for this particular purpose:

"What I was as an artist seemed to me of some importance while I lived; but what I really was as a believer in Christ Jesus is the only thing of importance to me now."

He left two sons and three daughters by his first wife, and three sons by his second, who also survived him. Of these children the second son, John, succeeded his father as a sculptor. He was born in 1777 and died in 1859. He was a successful artist, although never becoming a pre-eminent one. He executed the statue of William III. which was set up in St. James's Square, in 1808; and

many of his memorial tablets may be seen about the country. I call to mind, among others, one to John Woollett, who died in 1819, in Rye Church; one to Mary Caroline, seventh child of Sir William Clayton, who died in 1812, in the church of Marlow-on-Thames; and a monument to Lord Henniker, who died in 1803, in Rochester Cathedral, a large and elaborate piece of work; as well as those to Captains Harvey and Hull, to Warren Hastings and others, in Westminster Abbey.*

* J. Russell painted a portrait of John Bacon, senior, in 1792. Cunningham, speaking of the sculptor's personal appearance, says he was "about five feet eight inches in height, well made, of a fair complexion, and with a look which betokened vivacity and address," and this is indicated in Russell's picture.

CHAPTER X

THOMAS PROCTOR, JOHN DEARE, AGOSTINO CARLINI, J. C. F. ROSSI, THEED, GIUSEPPE CERACCHI, MRS. DAMER

Before saying anything about the two great men who followed Bacon in the world of sculpture—Flaxman and Chantrey—several lesser artists must be mentioned, one of whom, Mrs. Damer, was possessed of a singularly interesting personality, although her claims as a sculptress can hardly be said to be based on very solid grounds. As a brilliant amateur, however, she must take her place among more competent exponents of the art, and after saying what little there is to be said about the half-dozen men whose names head this chapter, I shall devote the best part of it to the gifted lady referred to.

The name of *Thomas Proctor* is totally forgotten to-day, but at one time it seemed as if this young artist were destined to challenge the supremacy of Nollekens, and to prove as naturally gifted a genius as Flaxman. Indeed he was one of those men who appear at long intervals, and who take a foremost position among their compeers, to whatever art they apply themselves. He was, however, a sort of artistic Chatterton, and although his end was not so tragic as that of the poet, his career was short enough to be regarded as almost equally meteoric.

Thomas Proctor was by birth a Yorkshireman, and first saw the light at the town of Settle, on April 22, 1753. Practically little or nothing is known of his early years, but he is said to have shown, in his youth, a marked leaning towards art, and he set himself to translate this through the medium of oil-painting. The little success he met with in this direction was probably the cause of his turning his attention to sculpture.

He became a student at the Royal Academy in 1777,

and began to exhibit three years later. In 1782 he gained the premium offered by the Society of Arts, as well as the Royal Academy's Medal for drawing, and in the following year, the medal for modelling from the life; while in 1784 he obtained the Academy's gold medal for historical painting. He then seems to have turned his attention solely to sculpture.

Here he found himself in a congenial atmosphere, and at once proceeded to show the world where his true avocation lay, working with such diligence and with such success (he produced his "Coronis," his "Elisha and the Son of the Shunammite," the "Restoration of Day after the Fall of Phaethon," and a plaster model of Peirithous, in 1791), that his contemporaries were astonished at his powers, and Sir Joshua, having seen, with admiration, a statue of "Ixion on the Wheel," which Proctor had produced, persuaded Sir Abraham Hume to purchase it.

Praise from so great a man and so consummate an artist as Reynolds, and the consequent patronage of Hume, gave an encouragement to Proctor which was falsified by events. He determined to aim at something still higher, and with this object he seems to have put all his genius and power into a large group representing "Diomed devoured by his Horses." For a year he worked assiduously at this great work, and when the model was completed, and the critics were invited to inspect it, a consensus of praise greeted the happy sculptor. Unfortunately, however, notwithstanding the eulogiums of the learned, no one came forward with a commission for Proctor to reproduce in marble what he had so vigorously and beautifully realised in clay. The result was more disastrous than could have been imagined, for the sculptor, overwrought perhaps by his labours, was disappointed to such a degree that he destroyed, in a fit of despair, the splendid work with which he had sought to attain fame.

At about the same time the Council of the Royal Academy, which had been, to its honour, fully alive to Proctor's great merits, determined that he should have the benefit of foreign training, and with this end in view,

passed a resolution, in 1793, for the payment of the necessary expenses incident on the sculptor's sojourn at Rome for the usual three years. When, however, it was sought to inform Proctor of the decision arrived at, he could nowhere be discovered.* The result of a more systematic investigation, in which Benjamin West took a prominent part, was the finding of the unhappy artist in a miserable garret in Clare Market, where he was discovered in a dying condition, the result of starvation and of a disappointment from which even the help brought him was unable to drag his despondent spirit. A few days later he had ceased to exist, and was buried in Hampstead Churchyard on July 13, 1794.

It is not unusual when such sad circumstances occur, to blame the powers that be for allowing genius to perish miserably; but in this case no such charge can be brought against any one. Proctor's own too sensitive nature seems alone to have been responsible for his untimely fate. Sir Joshua had obtained him a purchaser for his first work, and had, with others, given that work unstinted praise; the Royal Academy had made arrangements for the artist to profit, free of charge, by foreign travel and a sojourn in Italy. But Proctor had set his all on his great "Diomed," and when that failed, not to please, but to secure a purchaser, the effect was too much for his overstrung and perhaps inherently weak nature. With his death England not improbably lost one who, under happier auspices, might have taken his place among her greatest sculptors.

The short history of a contemporary sculptor whose life was even briefer than was that of Proctor, is another illustration of the waywardness of the artistic temperament when unaccompanied by a well-balanced mind. *John Deare*, to whom I here allude, was born, in Liverpool, on October 26, 1759. He was one of those whose talents are exhibited at such a tender age, as to cause them to be regarded as infant prodigies; for when but ten he is said to have produced a skeleton of a man in wood, entirely executed with a penknife, which caused

* After 1790 he had exhibited without giving his address.

astonishment on account of its verisimilitude. Such precocity obviously indicated the future of the child who exhibited it, and at the early age of sixteen Deare was placed with that Thomas Carter, the statuary, who executed the bas-relief on the Townshend monument in Westminster Abbey, and in whose employment the great Roubiliac had begun his career. Here he came into touch with J. T. Smith, who calls him his "playfellow," and who mentions him, here and there, in his "Life of Nollekens." At a somewhat later date Deare studied in the Royal Academy schools, where Flaxman and Proctor were also at this time distinguishing themselves. Nollekens was, at this same period, "Visitor" to the school, and it is said that so successful were the three young artists in draughtsmanship, that the elder man gave up his practice of drawing for that of modelling the figure in *basso-relievo*.

In 1779 Deare, whose excellence of workmanship and untiring industry had been manifest from the moment he entered the Royal Academy schools, obtained the Gold Medal, with a masterly group representing "Adam and Eve." This circumstance, coupled with the patronage and advice which Bacon, then in the zenith of his popularity, accorded him, seemed to promise young Deare a splendid future. He himself appears to have regarded his success with some amount of wonder, although he did not allow it to interfere with his industrious prosecution of technical knowledge. In 1785 the Royal Academy sent him, at its own expense, to study in Italy, a proof of the high estimation in which he now stood with that body. In Italy he met Canova, who was in raptures over him and his works; he also met a young lady, "a clever little Roman girl, who is at least my equal," he writes, and married her out of hand; the consequence being that instead of returning to England to take his place among the A.R.A.s, he settled in the South, and never saw his native country again.

He now began to identify himself with the Italian manner of living, so different from that of his youthful

upbringing in the North of England; and with it he developed habits of eccentricity of the most pronounced kind, much of which seems to have been due to a kind of hysteria. Always a hard worker, he continued to follow his art with unabated ardour, and in consequence grew nervous and irritable. Another circumstance, which certainly had a deleterious effect on his health, was his peculiar habit of attending to his devotions, which became with him long and frequent, without any clothing on, believing that prayer was only efficacious when offered up under such primitive conditions. Undoubtedly this way madness lay, and his life might have ended in insanity, had not his health, already enfeebled, given way altogether under the stress of another peculiar fad. He supposed that if he slept on the marble he was about to carve, inspiration would visit him in visions. Putting this peculiar theory into practice, he caught a severe cold, from the effects of which he never recovered, dying at Rome on August 17, 1795.

In John Deare a great sculptor was undoubtedly lost. He was not one of those men who regard size as a criterion of beauty; his order of mind was rather akin to Flaxman's than Bacon's. "What!" he once exclaimed to Smith, "is not that beautiful gem of Hercules strangling the lion a work of grand art? and that figure is contained in less than the space of an inch." He executed the famous "Marine Venus," which belonged to Sir Richard Worsley; but it was in bas-relief that his consummate talent best exhibited itself (that of "Edward and Eleanora," being a masterpiece). He was, in a word, a classic as Keats was a classic, by a series of fortuitous circumstances which are unexplainable.

Nollekens was never quite just to Deare; perhaps he recognised that here was a brother too near the throne! Once, indeed, the older man was admiring greatly a bas-relief representing some boys, but being informed that it was by Deare, his praise decreased rapidly, and although he allowed that the sculptor was "a clever fellow," he would not see the merit of much of his work, to which others accorded unstinted praise. When told

of his death, he remarked, "He's dead, is he? Fagan (an art dealer in Rome at one time) promised me some of his drawings, but I never had any. I have got two of his four *basso-relievos* of the Seasons, and the two oval *basso-relievos* of Cupid and Psyche. They are very clever, I assure you; but he was a very upstart fellow, or he ought to have made money by sending over some antiques from Rome. I told him I'd sell 'em for him, and so might many of 'em; but the sculptors nowadays never care for bringing home anything. They're all so stupid and conceited of their own abilities." Nollekens combined with a true instinct for art such a commercial spirit, that, like many men who have successfully made money by the latter attribute, he could not refrain from sneering at one who was only a great artist and had none of the characteristics of a shopkeeper.

Another man to be numbered among those who distinguished themselves in the art of sculpture above their numerous mediocre fellows, but of whom little has been recorded, was *Agostino Carlini*, a Genoese, who came to this country, and lived and died at No. 14 Carlisle Street, Soho. Carlini belongs to a rather earlier generation than the others dealt with in this chapter, having been a contemporary of Wilton, but as he did not die till 1790, he may be included here without my being guilty of a very grave anachronism. He was made a Royal Academician in 1768, being Wilton's only colleague on that occasion, and subsequently, in 1783, he became Keeper of the Academy, a post in which he followed Moser, and in which he was succeded by Wilton. Of the little that is known of Carlini's work, the statue of Dr. Ward—who is said to have allowed the sculptor £200 a year to keep the work in his studio and occasionally add touches to it—two statues and the masks on the keystones of the Strand front of Somerset House, are the best recognised, although he also made a model of an equestrian statue of George III. (exhibited 1769), figures representing Maritime Power (1770), and Plenty (1783), and designed a monument to Alderman Beckford, which was engraved by Bartolozzi.

It seems strange that a man who attained to such eminence in his art, should have left little or nothing by which we can gauge his capacity or the reason for his success; but so it is, and had not Smith left the following little picture of his personal appearance, we should have known even less than the little we now do about the man himself.

"When Carlini was Keeper of the Royal Academy," he writes, "he used to walk from his house to Somerset Place, with a broken tobacco-pipe in his mouth, and dressed in a deplorable great-coat; but when he has been going to the Academy dinner, I have seen him getting into a chair, full dressed in a purple silk coat, scarlet gold-laced waistcoat, point-lace ruffles, and a sword and bag." Could the force of antithesis further go? Carlini's death took place on August 16, 1790, at his house in Carlisle Street, Soho. There is an engraving of him with Cipriani and Bartolozzi, by J. R. Smith, after a picture by Rigaud.

The name of *John Charles Felix Rossi* might lead us to suppose that here we have to do with another Italian sculptor domiciled in England, but, though of Italian descent, Rossi was strictly an Englishman, and was the son of a physician practising at Nottingham, in which town John Charles Felix was born, in 1762. Exhibiting a leaning towards art as exemplified in sculpture, young Rossi was placed under an Italian sculptor residing in London, with whom he made such progress that he was transferred in due course (1781) to the Royal Academy school. Here he obtained a travelling studentship, and with its aid went to Rome, where he remained for three years, from 1785 to 1788. Among Rossi's works a beautiful group, representing "Celadon and Amelia," was in the possession of Lord Egremont, that bountiful patron of art, who also commissioned the sculptor to execute another figure for him, and caused him to make a marble replica of the figure of a girl seated with her arms clasped round her legs, by Nollekens, which had been one of that sculptor's favourite undertakings. Another well-known production of Rossi's was his masterly figure

(the adjective is J. T. Smith's) of "The Boxer," which was carved from a single block; while, among his busts that of Lord Thurlow, now at Burlington House, is excellent as regards dignity, balance, and similitude. Many of Rossi's monuments, chiefly representing military heroes, are in St. Paul's, where may be seen, from his hand, that to Lord Cornwallis, Lord Heathfield, Captain Faulkner, Lord Rodney, and others, all surrounded by those allegorical figures and trophies which so largely appealed to his generation.

In 1798 Rossi was made an A.R.A. (becoming a full R.A. four years later), and on the death of Bacon shortly afterwards he seems to have succeeded to much of the considerable practice of that sculptor. But he had not the capability of the older man, or, at any rate, he did not succeed in retaining the favour of the public, and when he died in 1839, he had already retired for many years from the Royal Academy with a pension, and had become almost forgotten.

Mr. Edmund Gosse thus sums up Rossi's claims as a sculptor: "It is very difficult to express an opinion on the work of Rossi, for the simple reason that he employed Italian carvers so clever that they took most of the individuality out of his modelling. His taste was classical, without any real leaning to the neo-Hellenic school of Banks, Flaxman, and Deare. . . . Rossi marks a stage in the passage of iconic sculpture in England from Carlini to Chantrey, but he can hardly be spoken of as an individual force."

William Theed, who was a contemporary and rival of Rossi, was born in 1764, and became a student in the Royal Academy schools in 1786. He early turned his attention to the painting of classical subjects, some of which he first exhibited in 1788. Subsequently he visited Rome, where he became friendly with Flaxman, and Howard the painter. It was probably the influence of the former that induced Theed to forsake the brush for the chisel, although, on his return to England, in 1794, we find him still exhibiting pictures. Later he entered the employment of the Wedgwoods as an art

designer, and he remained in their employ till 1803, after which he worked, in a similar capacity, for Rundell and Bridges, designing their gold and silver plate for a number of years. He was elected an A.R.A. in 1811, and was a full R.A. from 1813 till his death in 1817; but his claims to be considered in any way a great sculptor are of the smallest. He executed a certain number of statues, but chiefly gave himself up to the representation of abstract sentimentalities which were neither based on the antique, on the one hand, or on nature on the other. In his hands the already obviously decadent Georgian school of sculpture appeared always at its worst; his was the last word on effeteness, and he would hardly require mention but that his name has somehow survived, as is occasionally the case with mediocrities, in the midst of those of better and more notable men.

He deposited at the Royal Academy, as his Diploma work, in 1813, a Bacchanalian group, and in the previous year had exhibited a life-sized group representing "Thetis returning from Vulcan with Arms for Achilles," now in the Royal Collection.

His son, W. Theed (1804–1891), was a far better known sculptor, probably his best recognised works being the fine group representing "Africa," on the Albert Memorial, and his monuments in Westminster Abbey to Sir James Mackintosh and others; but his career does not come within the limits of this book.

Giuseppe Ceracchi, who was born according to some authorities in Corsica, and to others in Rome, about the year 1760, was a sculptor of no mean attainments. He came to this country in 1773, and did a large amount of work for the Adam brothers and other architects of the period, in decorating the houses they erected with those bas-reliefs with which they were so often embellished. Notwithstanding this and the other considerable work he did in England, it is, curiously enough, as the one-time master of Mrs. Damer, who was, after all, but a clever amateur, that he is now chiefly remembered. There seems little doubt that he not only taught that clever and versatile lady much of what she knew of sculp-

ture (as we shall see, she had a few lessons from Bacon as well), but also put many of the finishing touches to much of her achievement—that portion of it probably which is regarded as the most notable; although it would be equally unfair to her to assume, as some have done, that Ceracchi was himself practically responsible for all her best work.

Besides what he did in connection with the domestic architecture of his day, Ceracchi executed two well-known groups, one representing "Thetis and Jupiter," the other "Castor and Pollux"; the design of Lord Chatham's monument in St. Paul's was also his, and, perhaps best known of all, the statue of "Mrs. Damer as the Muse of Sculpture," which may now be seen at the British Museum. This figure is naturally posed, graceful and light in execution, and the drapery is well cut and effective. From what we know, by portraits of Mrs. Damer, Ceracchi seems to have rather idealised the features; but on the whole the work is a successful and a very pleasing one, and must have been very gratifying to the lady. Sir Joshua Reynolds also sat to Ceracchi, who produced the only marble bust ever carved of the painter.

After labouring for some years in England, Ceracchi went to America with the hope of being employed to execute a statue of Liberty which he had conceived. For some reason or other, this project fell through, and the disappointed sculptor returned to Europe. For a time he settled in Rome, but his was a wayward and restless disposition, and we next find him in Paris, mixed up in one of the numerous plots which were aimed at the life of Napoleon I. The particular one in which he was concerned came to a head in 1801, but was discovered in time, when Ceracchi was condemned to death and executed. The character of the man is exemplified in the fact that he elected to be taken to the guillotine in a car which he had himself designed; and it is even said that he went to his death habited as a Roman emperor, although under what conditions the authorities permitted him to make such a ridiculous show of himself, is a mystery.

Mrs. Damer (*née* Anne Seymour Conway) was the daughter and only child of the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway, who became a General and later a Field-Marshal, and his wife Caroline, Countess of Ailesbury, a cultivated and artistic lady, the daughter of Colonel Campbell of Mamore, who had married first (as his third wife), Lord Bruce, afterwards third Earl of Ailesbury, whose title she retained when marrying *en second noces.*

Anne Seymour Conway was born at Coomb Bank, Sundridge, Kent, in the church of which place she lies buried, in 1748. Her father's profession of arms prevented him, during her earlier years, from settling long in any one place, and she passed much of her childhood under the care of relatives. Thus in 1752, when her parents were obliged to reside in Ireland, she was left under the guardianship of her godfather and cousin, Horace Walpole, who, in several of his letters, mentions her; and, as he was delighted to do later in the case of the Barrys, was never tired of imparting to his correspondents examples of her understanding and precocity. In 1757, Anne was present at the marriage of her half-sister, Lady Mary Bruce, with the third Duke of Richmond, the nobleman already mentioned in connection with that sculpture gallery of which Wilton was, for a time, director. Indeed, during this period, Miss Conway spent the usual life of a child whose friends and relatives were highly placed, and at Coomb Bank, Latimer, another house rented by her parents, and at the beautiful Park Place, near Henley, which they eventually purchased, she passed her early years until the age of seventeen, when a circumstance occurred which is regarded as having given her that bias towards plastic art in which she was to make something of a name.

At this period the historian, David Hume, who had previously been secretary to her uncle, Lord Hertford, took up a similar position under her father, then become General Conway and a man of importance. Hume was thus intimate with the Conway household, and sometimes varied his secretarial duties by accompanying Anne in her walks. On one of these occasions they met a young

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Italian, an itinerant vendor of plaster images, such as, at one time, were frequently to be seen in this country. The boy endeavoured to dispose of some of his wares to Hume, who, having conversed some time with him, gave him a shilling and passed on. Anne was annoyed at her companion talking to a common boy, as she called him, and wasting time in looking at his productions, and told the historian so. Hume, therefore, pointed out that even the modelling of such rough images was not unattended by science and art, and concluded his paternal harangue by remarking that he doubted if, with all her attainments, she could do anything, in this direction, as clever. The girl said nothing, but the lesson was not thrown away upon her, and a few days later, having in the meantime procured the necessary tools and material, she presented to her monitor a head she had herself modelled. She supposed that Hume would be astounded at her performance, but, having examined the bust, he merely told her that it was better than first attempts usually were, but also reminded her that it was very much easier to model in wax than to carve in marble. Nothing daunted, she then tried her hand with the chisel, and some time after was able to show Hume a rough bust carved by herself in marble. Surprised rather at the tenacity of purpose thus exhibited than at any inherent promise in the work, the historian praised her to her heart's content, and thus was laid the foundations of that lifelong devotion to this form of art which Anne Conway carried with her to the grave, and which, despite the distractions of fashion and politics, to which she frequently succumbed, was the sheet-anchor, as it were, of her career.

If the sober and large-visioned Hume could be forced into commendation, one can imagine what praise the young girl received from her aristocratic friends, who, perhaps, thought they saw in her the champion who was to prove that even high birth and fashionable life could produce a genius, as well as the humbler classes of society. Horace Walpole was, of course, in ecstasies. He had chronicled the attainments of noble authors, and here

was a noble artist and—his own cousin and godchild. Writing at a later date, after Anne Conway had become a wife, he exclaims, "Mrs. Damer has chosen a walk more difficult and far more uncommon than painting. . . . Mrs. Damer's busts from the life are not inferior to the antique, and theirs, we are sure, were not more like. Her shock-dog, large as life, and only not alive, has a looseness and softness in the curls that seemed impossible to terra-cotta; it rivals the marble one of Bernini in the Royal Collection." Such absurd and fulsome hyperboles as these are very unfair on the sculptress. She did nothing that could be put in any comparison with the relics of antiquity; she was not even excellent when compared with the better-known French or English sculptors, and to judge her on such grounds would be at once to dismiss her claims out of court. What she was, was an amateur of more than usual determination and artistic feeling. A circumstance had caused her to try her hand at sculpture, and she had achieved, as a young girl, inexperienced and untaught, a certain measure of success; just as she might have done had her attention been, in the same way, drawn to painting or to playing billiards. Subsequent industry, combined with the lessons she had received from Cipriani and Bacon, and an undoubted love of art, caused her to attain some prominence, but had she been of less distinguished parentage or had her friends failed to puff the sails of her little argosy, it seems more than likely that she would never have made a living by her chisel. What *is* commendable about her is that, surrounded by a society whose chief aim was the attainment of easy pleasures and the daily gratification of its senses, she should have given up herself to more serious employment and, at least, have succeeded in leaving an honourable name as an earnest and conscientious striver after perfection. A great artist she never was, and only the partiality of a man like Walpole, who delighted to praise if he could praise one of the nobility, could have been guilty of doing Mrs. Damer the injustice of comparing her achievement with that which the finest artists of Greece and Rome have left us.

Anne Conway had, indeed, at first little time to produce anything of importance, although to these years, 1765–7, must be dated the lessons she received in sculpture and anatomy, for on June 14, 1767, she was married to the Hon. John Damer, eldest son of the first Lord Milton. This alliance was wholly unsatisfactory, and it was childless. The husband seems to have thought of nothing but the cut of his clothes and the splendour of his jewels, and his folly and extravagance were the talk even of a society in which extravagance and folly were the rule rather than the exception. Having run into debt to an immense amount—the figure is put at £70,000—this young fool of quality ended his useless existence by shooting himself after an orgy at the Bedford Arms Tavern in Covent Garden, in the early hours of the morning of August 15, 1776. That his widow should have greatly grieved over the end of what appears to have been a *mariage de convénance*, was hardly to be expected. But she was put to some straits at first from want of money. Her father-in-law behaved shabbily enough, although she gave up one year's income towards the liquidation of her late husband's debts, and it was with difficulty that she could obtain regular payment of the jointure which had been settled on her. Perhaps, however, so far as her art went, this seeming hardship was a blessing in disguise. She was obliged, for the sake of economy, to spend some years after her husband's death abroad, and the experience of seeing many fine works of art, which she might not otherwise have enjoyed, must have enlarged her outlook and sobered her judgment. She was now able to turn her whole attention to sculpture, and this, with certain intervals taken up by politics (she took, with the Duchess of Devonshire and Mrs. Crewe, a prominent part in Fox's famous Westminster Election of 1784) and no small amount of time and energy given to private theatricals, in which she acted with much skill and distinction, being one of the most prominent of those who took part in the plays organised at Richmond House, Whitehall, occupied her more serious moments during the remainder of her long life.

Her excursions into the art of sculpture were chiefly confined to the execution of busts of her friends and groups of the animals she loved. Among the former was that of Lady Elizabeth Foster, afterwards Duchess of Devonshire, now belonging to the Duke of Devonshire, and that of Viscountess Melbourne in the possession of Earl Cowper. Erasmus Darwin, of Botanical Garden fame, wrote some lines on these two works, in which grace is more apparent than impartial criticism :

How do they run ?

> Long with soft touch shall Damer's chisel charm ;
> With grace delight us and with beauty warm ;
> Foster's fine form shall hearts unborn engage
> And Melbourne's smile enchant another age.

Miss Farren, who became Lady Derby, was another friend whose face was perpetuated by Mrs. Damer's chisel ; while that of Sir Joseph Banks, now in the British Museum, and a rather famous one of Nelson (one of her heroes—Napoleon, curiously enough, was another), as well as one of her father, General Conway, are among the best of her works in this direction. She also executed the "Osprey Eagle," on which Horace Walpole set such store, delighting to point it out among the wonders and gimcrackery of Strawberry Hill, and under which he had the temerity to inscribe the line :

> Non me Praxiteles finxit, at Anna Damer,

in which the correctness of the pentameter will hardly atone for the absurd implication.

Like that of most amateurs, Mrs. Damer's work was curiously unequal. Sometimes she succeeded excellently, as in the two masks on Henley Bridge, representing the Thame and the Isis ; sometimes she degenerated into the lowest depths of bathos, as with her colossal figure of George III. in the Register Office of Scotland, at Edinburgh, which would probably never have found a place there had not her uncle, Lord Frederick Campbell, been Lord Clerk Register. It has about the same importance as have the waxwork figures of the kings in Westminster Abbey ! That it was a stupendous undertaking for a

woman's hand must be allowed, but this should not blind us to its inherent defects; its total want of distinction, its heavy, uninspired lines.

It has been suggested that, where Mrs. Damer has succeeded in her output, she was probably aided by Ceracchi or by Bacon; but she produced some of her better work when the one was dead and after the other had left this country, and I think that such a charge cannot well be supported; rather, perhaps, should the inequality observable in her work be traced to an insufficient initial training which cannot be atoned for, except in the case of a born genius, by any amount of subsequent labour or study.

The list of Mrs. Damer's productions * will give an idea of her industry, and of the varied character of her output, and for this reason I set it down here, although it must not be regarded as chronological or complete:

Two kittens, in white marble; the "Osprey Eagle"; once at Strawberry Hill. A dog, in marble; presented to Queen Charlotte. A group of two sleeping dogs, in white marble; given by Mrs. Damer to the Duke of Richmond and now at Gordon Castle. Her Italian greyhound, Fidèle, in white marble. Models of various dogs, in terra-cotta. Statue of George III. in Register Office, Edinburgh. The two masks on Henley Bridge. Two bas-reliefs, in terra-cotta, representing scenes from Shakespeare's "Coriolanus" and "Antony and Cleopatra." A model of a greyhound, exhibited at the Royal Academy, in 1799.

Busts

Charles James Fox, presented to Napoleon in 1815.

Lady Ailesbury (Mrs. Damer's mother).

Lord Nelson, in the Common Council Chamber at the Guildhall.

Sir Joseph Banks, in terra-cotta.

* This is given in an interesting "Life of Mrs. Damer," by Mr. Percy Noble, and was compiled from those in Walpole's "Anecdotes" and Dallaway's "Lives of the Painters."

Prince Lubomerski, as a young Bacchus; in the University Museum, at Oxford.

Mrs. Siddons, as the Tragic Muse.

Mrs. Damer herself; presented by her to the Royal Gallery at Florence.

Another of the same; given to R. Payne Knight.

Lady Melbourne; now at Panshanger.

Lady Elizabeth Foster; now in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire.

The Hon. Peniston Lamb, as Mercury, marble.

Sir Humphry Davy, marble.

Queen Caroline, wife of George IV., marble.

Lady Ailesbury, marble, on her tomb, designed also by Mrs. Damer, in Sundridge Church.

General Conway, in terra-cotta.

Miss Mary Berry.

Lord Nelson. Of this there was a model for a cast in bronze, and one in bronze, presented to the Duke of Clarence, and now at Windsor.

A criticism of this appeared in the *Morning Post* of May 5, 1804, and was gallantly reprinted by Horace Walpole at the Strawberry Hill Press. The touch of partiality appears in it, and also a hinted protest against those who would contend that Mrs. Damer was not entirely responsible for her more successful productions. It runs thus :

" Among the number of busts that people this year's exhibition, stands pre-eminent in merit, as it does in situation, that of Lord Nelson. It was entirely finished, as well as conceived, by the Honourable Mrs. Damer; for while most of the modern statuaries, modellers strictly speaking rather than sculptors, confine their own labours to shaping the ductile clay, and suffer what little fire they may have instilled in this pliant material, again to evaporate under the mechanical process of the journeyman, who thence copies the fragile form in the more stubborn marble, simply by rule and compass, the fair hand of a female artist remains as yet almost unrivalled in the arduous task of singly defying every difficulty opposed by the hardest produce of the Parian quarry.

(As Thackeray would have said, "What a hoighth of foine language entoirely"!)

"Notwithstanding its modern costume, this portrait of Lord Nelson displays more of the true spirit of the antique than most of the sculptured worthies that grace the circle formed round its base; spite of all the advantage they enjoy of Roman togas, or bared bosoms. It possesses that breadth of style which, carefully discarding every incidental minutiæ of the feature, unworthy of record, as unconnected with the effect of the countenance or expression of the mind, prevents the truth of the resemblance from being diminished, instead of increased, by a confusion of unmeaning details, cavities and protuberances, dimples and pimples, not mellowed by any assistance of colours, not smoothed down by any touch of the pencil. It exhibits, moreover, a simplicity of attitude inseparable from real dignity. Looking straight forward to the object of all his thoughts and wishes, the Hero of Aboukir here appears, not studying his *air de tête* by some affected twist of the neck, as ungraceful as it is ridiculous, where no action of an entire body accounts for this constrained motion of the head, but attentively surveying the scene of his future triumph and glory."

Besides the works just mentioned Mrs. Damer executed a bust of Paris, in marble, and one in the same material of Miss Farren, who was represented as Thalia.

A third bust of Nelson, in bronze, was sent by Mrs. Damer, at the suggestion of Sir Alexander Johnston, a cousin of hers by marriage, to that King of Tanjore who, having been educated in the European manner, was anxious to introduce into his State the arts and sciences of the West. The circumstance seems to have opened up a vista in the active mind's eye of the lady, of substituting modern sculpture for the innumerable Hindoo idols which received the worship of these Eastern people, and she contemplated the introduction of a series of statues and busts of European worthies into the far-off region of Tanjore. There seems little doubt that, with her characteristic energy, she would have

carried this project at least into partial effect, but the idea had presented itself too late in her career for its fulfilment.

Other circumstances in the active life of this not unremarkable woman hardly concern us in a notice dealing with her as an artist, but one or two points in her career may be mentioned. Thus her journeyings to the Continent were not always without incident. At such a period, when the disturbed state of France was a constant menace to the peace of Europe, it was not always safe even to cross the Channel, and on one occasion the boat in which Mrs. Damer was voyaging, was captured by a French man-of-war, although the lady was subsequently liberated none the worse for her experience, except that the circumstance had thoroughly frightened her devoted godfather, Horace Walpole. The Westminster Election of 1784, to which I have already alluded, was another landmark in her career; while the part she took in the Richmond House theatricals, which were favourably criticised in the daily papers and thus spread her fame as an amateur actress, was, at a later date, repeated when, as mistress of Strawberry Hill, she produced there Miss Berry's comedy entitled "The Fashionable Friends."

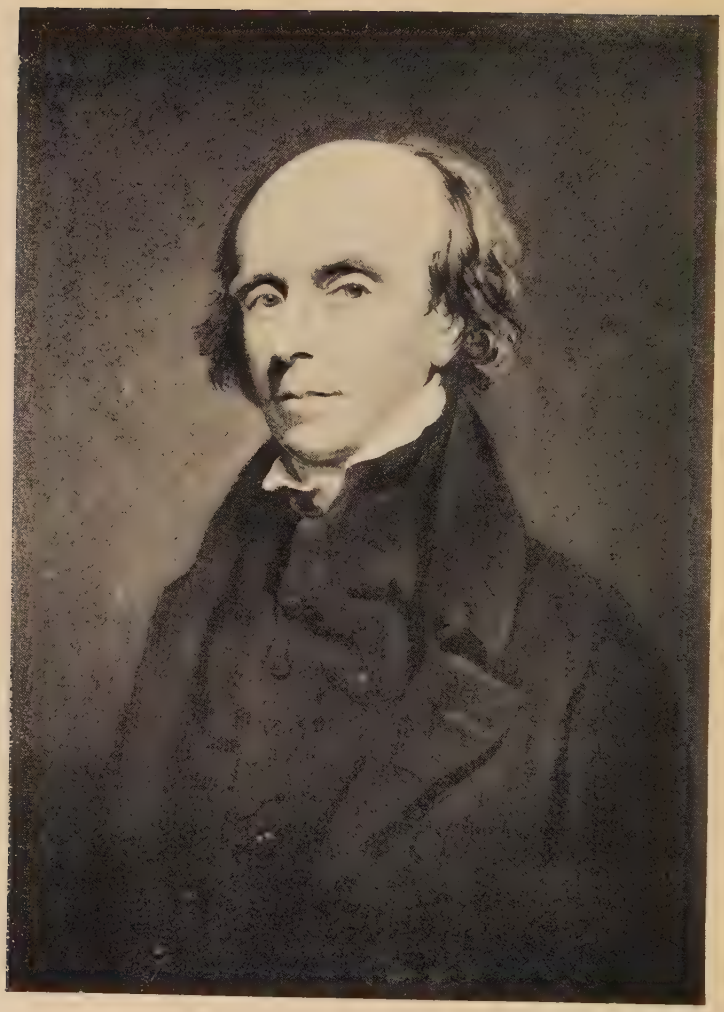
In 1803 she lost her mother, who died on January 17; her father had predeceased his wife in 1795; and Horace Walpole had followed his friend to the grave two years later. By the death of General Conway, Mrs. Damer had inherited a sum sufficient to make any financial anxieties henceforth unnecessary; by that of Walpole she found herself mistress of Strawberry Hill, together with £2000 per annum for its upkeep. Here she resided for a number of years, but in 1811 she gave it up to the next heir, the Dowager-Countess of Waldegrave, and took York House, Twickenham, after residing for a time at Lady Buckinghamshire's house at East Sheen. She also possessed a London residence, 9 Upper Brook Street, and here, on May 28, 1828, she peacefully ended her long and interesting life.

She had known most of the fashionable and notable

people of her time, had been introduced to Napoleon and Josephine and had received presents from them; had been intimate with Fox and the Duchess of Devonshire; had worshipped Nelson and been on terms of familiar intercourse with Sir William and Lady Hamilton. She had received Queen Caroline, and had acted with the Berrys, and the ubiquitous Creevey knew her. The fact that Napoleon and Fox were two of her idols is rather indicative of that love of being opposed to the conservative ideas generally held by her class, which was characteristic of her temperament. Like some other well-born people at this period, as at most periods for the matter of that, she regarded the possession of brains as of more account than the accident of birth. In her case, however, it would seem that had she not enjoyed the latter accident, she would hardly have come down to us with the somewhat overrated artistic reputation which she now, to a certain extent, enjoys. She deserves, however, praise for this: that in an unthinking generation she gave herself to thought, and where she might easily have lived an empty life of self-indulgence, she scorned delights and lived laborious days. For this reason alone, had her artistic achievement been far below the level it, on occasion, attained, she would deserve commendation, and would be entitled to a certain place among the sculptors who have worked in this country.

The representations of Mrs. Damer are fairly numerous. She sat to Sir Joshua Reynolds, both in 1762 and in 1773; Angelica Kauffmann painted her portrait, seated, in three-quarter length, an engraving of the bust portion being published by R. Cooper in 1810; Richard Cosway executed a well-known miniature of her, in 1794, as well as a full-length, leaning against a pedestal, on which stands a bust. There is also a terrible picture of the sculptress, engraved by Walker, in which she is shown holding a flower in one hand and standing by the bust of a child. But perhaps the best likeness of her is that by an unknown painter, representing her in advanced age engaged on a bust which stands on a modelling stool.

This portrait is in the possession of Mrs. F. Erskine Johnston, and has far more character than have the other representations of Mrs. Damer. Besides these, there is the bust of herself which she presented to the city of Florence, and the excellent full-length statue executed by Ceracchi, to which I have before referred.



JOHN FLAXMAN

CHAPTER XI

FLAXMAN

When the German painter, Gotzenberger, was on a visit to this country, he once remarked that he had seen here many men of talent, but only three men of genius; of these Coleridge was one, Blake another, and the third was John Flaxman; while it is known that Blake himself called Flaxman the "Sculptor of Eternity." Whether or not Flaxman actually came within the narrow range connoted by the much-discussed and very illusive term, genius, certain it is that he was not only one of the greatest of British sculptors, but also one of the most inventive, and purest in style, as well as one of the most classic, in the true acceptation of the word, of any in the whole range of modern sculpture.

John Flaxman was born on July 6, 1755, at York, and was the second son of another John Flaxman, by his first wife, whose maiden name was Lee. The Flaxman family traditionally traced its descent from forebears who had fought not without distinction in the Civil Wars; but although they carried arms on the winning side and even got some of themselves killed in the service of Cromwell, they appear to have gained little by it, and John Flaxman the elder seems to have had somewhat of a struggle to support himself and his family. In order to do this more effectually, he left York in the beginning of 1756, and established himself in a small shop in New Street, Covent Garden, moving later on to the Strand, where he sold the plaster casts and figures which he himself manufactured. Young Flaxman was a delicate child, and was also partially deformed; he was thus prevented from mixing much with companions of his own age, and in consequence his reflective faculties were exercised in a

precocious way, as frequently happens when children are prevented from expending their energies in physical exercise. Visitors to the little shop in New Street were accustomed to see the small boy sitting in a padded chair behind the counter, making drawings for his own amusement, or else devouring such books as he could get hold of. Even in these early days, it was discovered that he had made, already, some acquaintance with Homer (presumably in a translation), and was exercising his ingenuity in producing fancy sketches from the scenes described in the great epic. Altogether, it was realised that this was no ordinary child; and if it be true that Roubiliac, on being shown some of his sketches, declared that they were extraordinary as the work of so young a child, but showed no evidence of future greatness, it is likewise certain that the majority who saw them were of a very different opinion, and predicted a great future for the youngster.

Of these, was a certain Rev. Mr. Mathew, who was fond of artistic things, and who thus describes his first meeting with young Flaxman: "I went to the shop of old Flaxman to have a figure repaired," he says, "and whilst I was standing there I heard a child cough behind the counter. I looked over and there I saw a little boy seated on a small chair, with a large chair before him, on which lay a book he was reading. His fine eyes and beautiful forehead interested me, and I said, 'What book is that?' He raised himself on his crutches, bowed and said, 'Sir, it is a Latin book, and I am trying to learn it.' 'Aye, indeed?' I answered. 'You are a fine boy; but this is not the proper book—I'll bring you a right one to-morrow.' I did as I promised, and the acquaintance thus casually begun ripened into one of the best friendships of my life." Surrounded as the boy was by his father's casts and models, it would have been strange had he not also tried his hand at something in the same direction; and we are told that he was accustomed, in the intervals of book learning and drawing, to make small figures in plaster of paris, wax, and clay, some of which clearly indicated that it was no common hand that formed them.

This self-education continued until Flaxman's tenth year, when a sudden change came over his physical being. From a weak and ailing child he suddenly blossomed into a strong and relatively active boy. Reflection and study gave place to action and exercise; but his receptive and romantic mind merely took on a new colouring, and from the misty classicism of Homer, he passed at a bound to the exciting adventures of Don Quixote. So imbued, indeed, did he become with Cervantes' immortal hero, we are told, that on one occasion he armed himself with a toy sword and set out to find adventures in Hyde Park! But such circumstances were but the result of fleeting moods; and as he had been, if ever man was, born a sculptor, so as a sculptor he determined to achieve fame. Surrounded in his father's shop with models of all kinds, he had something of an academy to his hand, and he made the best use of his opportunities—opportunities which, however, lacked systematic training and, although supplying models, did not produce instructors. It is said that about this time young Flaxman made a drawing of a human eye which when shown to the painter Mortimer drew forth the mortifying inquiry, "Is it an oyster?" Less than this has crushed budding hope, but Flaxman's belief in himself was too deep-seated to be destroyed by a jest, and if he determined henceforth to keep his efforts to himself, he did not refrain from making them, or of educating himself, by study and practice, for the art he was bent on following. Certain domestic changes at this period do not seem to have disturbed the boy's genius for application. True his mother died; but she was not, from what we can learn, a very great help-mate to his father, whose affairs became more prosperous simultaneously with his loss. He now removed to a larger establishment in the Strand, where his business continued to improve, and later, when he married a second time, his new wife treated young John and his elder brother in a tender and judicious manner, very different from what tradition usually associates with a step-mother. All then went well at home, and as young Flaxman grew, so he contrived to make progress with his art.

It, however, generally requires some outside influence to give the first necessary motive power on the road to success, and in this case, it was forthcoming, in the person of the Mr. Mathew who had interested himself in Flaxman's Latin studies. This gentleman's wife was one of those learned ladies who, with her acquaintances, Mrs. Chapone, Mrs. Montagu, and Mrs. Barbauld, formed a galaxy of female learning which has earned them the name, due to quite a subsidiary circumstance, of blue-stockings. At her house in Rathbone Place, Mrs. Mathew was accustomed to hold evening receptions, on which occasions she gave readings from the classics and discoursed on all manner of subjects, from poetry to art. At the same time she was a kind and agreeable woman, and she readily received her husband's young *protégé* into her select and learned circle. One of Flaxman's biographers thus refers to this period of his career :

"At this house where he was for many years a welcome visitor, he passed frequent evenings in very enlightened and delightful society. Here he was encouraged in studying the dead languages so necessary to him in his profession ; by acquiring these he learned to think with the authors, and to embody the ideas of Homer, Hesiod, and Æschylus in a manner that no modern artist has exceeded." Sometimes during Mrs. Mathew's classical readings, young Flaxman would sit, paper and pencil in hand, engaged in reproducing some passage that caught his fancy, or delineating what he imagined to have been the lineaments and attitudes of some Homeric hero or some protagonist in the Æschylean drama. Some of these productions came under the notice of Mr. Crutchley of Sunninghill Park, and so pleased was he with them that he gave Flaxman a commission for a set of six, to be executed in black chalk, and to embody subjects from the classics. The "Iliad," the "Œdipus Coloneus," the "Alcestis," &c., were drawn upon by the young artist, and although these early efforts exhibited marks of immaturity, there was in them so much knowledge and, as has been well said, "such quiet loveliness and serene vigour," that it did not require much insight to foretell the future greatness of their producer.

It was not before he had passed his fifteenth year that Flaxman enjoyed the benefit of systematic training, but he then became a student at the Royal Academy schools. He inaugurated his first year of study by exhibiting a figure, in wax, representing Neptune; this was his earliest effort in pure sculpture, and with it he obtained the Society's Silver Medal.

But he seems still to have largely devoted his attention to drawing, in which he was at first more at home than in plastic work. Indeed, from this period till his twentieth year, he only exhibited some ten models at the Royal Academy, a circumstance partly due to his fastidious desire to show nothing but his very best, but also largely resulting from the time he devoted to the other branch of his art. Of these ten examples, one representing "Grecian Comedy" may be mentioned; while another was "A Vestal"; and there were certain busts of friends, among which Cunningham is inclined to place that of his father, one-third the size of life. He is also said to have made a few excursions in oils, and one of these—"Œdipus and Antigone"—was at a later date sold by public auction as an example of Domenichino! Flaxman worked assiduously in the schools; his evident delight in his labours and the progress he made in them attracted the attention of the authorities, who quickly recognised that here was a student with whom it was worth while to take more than ordinary pains. Among his fellow-labourers were the gentle Stothard and the inspired Blake, with the latter of whom Flaxman was soon on terms of close intimacy. There were many bonds of sympathy between the two men, and if Flaxman's eyes did not always roll in the fine frenzy which so frequently illumined those of Blake, his inward thoughts were not less poetical and his achievement as lofty.

Actuated by a desire to reach the highest rung of the artistic ladder, and emboldened by the success which had made the Silver Medal of the Academy his, Flaxman now determined to make a bid for the much-coveted Gold Medal. There seemed every reason for his gaining it. He had made great strides in his art; his natural ability

was patent to all; his industry and determination were boundless; and, in addition, none of his competitors appeared to have so good a chance of success as he. But he was destined to disappointment. The prize fell to Engleheart! The blow must have been a severe one, for not only had Flaxman made up his mind that he would obtain the medal, but he never for an instant supposed that defeat would come to him at the hands of so greatly inferior an artist as Engleheart.

According to one of his biographers, he once thus referred to the circumstance, in later days: "I gave in my model at the Academy, and believed the medal was my own. I knew what Engleheart could do, and I did not dread him. The Council gave, as is usual, a subject to model in a specified time—mine was finished ere my opponent had begun—he completed his at length, and we had to await the issue. Conceit was my comfort—I had made up my mind that I was to win, and even invited some friends to cheer themselves at my table till I should return from the Academy with the prize. It was given by Reynolds to Engleheart—I burst into tears. This sharp lesson humbled my conceit, and I determined to redouble my exertions, and put it, if possible, beyond the power of any one to make mistakes for the future." Nothing shows more clearly the even balance of Flaxman's mind than the fact that, while smarting under a defeat which he as well as others considered unmerited, he should not have given way to despair, as we have seen that Proctor did, with less provocation, on a somewhat similar occasion, but should have determined by closer application and redoubled persistence to turn defeat into the means of future victory. To us now the selection of Engleheart for the prize seems altogether inexplicable; but the lesser man was the older student, and probably his more academic methods appealed to those in authority.

Flaxman appears, about this time, to have entered into an arrangement with the Wedgwoods,* by which he

* He designed a set of chessmen for Wedgwood, now in the Soane Museum.

agreed to supply them with designs for their famous pottery, and many of the beautiful examples of this work which we now admire,

> . . . with brede
> Of marble men and maidens overwrought,

owe their classic charm to his pencil.

But such labour as this was after all but a subsidiary part of the sculptor's output, and lovely as it often is, must be regarded as journeyman work undertaken to keep the pot boiling until such time as commissions for sculpture should flow in. The connection with the Wedgwoods certainly did this; and what is more, as their productions were largely *répandues*, Flaxman was enabled to disseminate, by these means, true artistic beauty in a far more general way than would have been the case had he confined his activity to producing a statue of this patron or a bust for that. A thing because small is sometimes regarded as of less account than some large undertaking, but provided it contains the true essence of art, it is every whit as significant, and even more so if it has a chance of being multiplied and seen by larger numbers of people. For this reason a Wedgwood vase has often a deeper significance than a colossal group of statuary; and the time Flaxman expended on such things had thus its deep and lasting importance in the history of art. During these years Flaxman's home was still with his father, and in the premises in the Strand, he continued to model and sketch, and to design for the Wedgwoods, and he even tried his hand at carving in marble (in which art, however, he is said never to have become proficient), having received a commission from Mr. Knight of Portland Place for a statue of Alexander the Great. At this period, one covered by the decade from 1772 to 1782, the sculptor was busily engaged, for besides the work I have mentioned, he exhibited, in all, thirteen examples of his skill at the Royal Academy exhibitions, including five busts in wax and terra-cotta, and a model for a monument to the poet Chatterton, of which, however, nothing further seems to be known. Of the remaining six works, all were characteristically

classical, and included "Pompey after Pharsalia"; "Agrippina after the Death of Germanicus"; "Hercules Furens"; "Acis and Galatea"; and "The Death of Cæsar." As all of these were either executed in terra-cotta or plaster of paris, it is conjectured that Flaxman still found it hard to make both ends meet, otherwise he would, presumably, have repeated at least some of them in marble, and have produced them in life-size. The conclusion may or may not be accurate; certain it is that these early productions never emerged from their half life-size clay models.

In 1782, Flaxman may be said to have set up for himself, for in this year he rented a small house and studio in Wardour Street and married; the lady, a Miss Anne Denman, having long been known and loved by him.

Mrs. Flaxman seems to have been in every way a model wife; a careful housekeeper and a sympathetic critic; and there is no doubt that, with her as his constant companion, Flaxman made greater strides in his art than he would have done had he been forced to carry on his labours alone without any one to whom he could impart his projects or his hopes and fears. Sir Joshua, from the heights of his confirmed bachelorhood, affected to distrust this step: "So, Flaxman, I am told that you are married," he exclaimed, one day; "if so, sir, I tell you you are ruined for an artist." One does not suppose that Flaxman was much troubled by Reynolds's remark, even if it was, as is not proved, made seriously. Indeed, he is said to have exclaimed, on his return home, "Anne, I am ruined for an artist," adding, when his wife anxiously asked him what had occurred: "It happened in the church, and Anne Denman has done it. I met Sir Joshua Reynolds just now, and he said marriage had ruined me in my profession." Yet the President's words opened up a train of thought in Flaxman's brain. He was satisfied that the fact of having a wife was rather a stimulus to his art than otherwise; but he also reflected that what knowledge he possessed had never been tested by acquaintance with the great relics of antiquity abroad; and he, perhaps rightly, thought that any ignorance he might

henceforth display in his work would not be put down to ignorance of what his great artistic forebears had left in Italy, but to the fact that he had married a wife and would therefore, as Reynolds had predicted, never be an artist. But his affairs were not in a sufficiently flourishing condition to allow of his indulging in foreign travel just yet, and it was, indeed, not till five years later that he was able to put his project into execution and to visit Rome and revel in its classic treasures.

During these five years Flaxman was occupied on a number of works which, if they cannot be reckoned among his finest achievements, yet indicated that beautiful sense of restraint, that naturally classic calm, which pervades even his lesser works. The mural tablet, in Chichester Cathedral, to the memory of William Collins, the poet, was one of the earliest of his monuments. Collins is shown in profile, sitting and reading his Bible: you will remember he once told Johnson that he had but one book, but that that was the best of all books. By his side, on the ground, is a lyre and a copy of his poems, lying neglected, as the author reads something far greater and more poetical. The whole thing is quite simple—and it is this element of simplicity that distinguishes it now, as it did still more at a period when sepulchral memorials were wont to be flamboyant and often vulgar.

Another monument executed by Flaxman about this period was that in memory of Mrs. Morley, which may be seen in Gloucester Cathedral. Mrs. Morley was drowned, together with her child; and the sculptor has poetically reproduced the circumstance in a bas-relief, and has shown that in the portraying of action he could be as successful as in the representing of repose. Yet another work, dating, however, from a rather later time, may be mentioned here, as it was the accompanying monument to that of Collins; it was that executed tc the memory of Miss Cromwell, and shows us a "female figure, of great beauty and composure of look, carried up into heaven by angels."

Of Flaxman's other work at this period, there are known to have been a memorial to a lady who predeceased

her child but a short time, a couple of busts of men, exhibited in 1784, and a group of "Venus and Cupid," commissioned by Mr. Knight, and regarded by the sculptor as one of the finest of his earlier efforts.

At last, in 1787, Flaxman was free to put into effect his long-cherished plan of visiting Rome, and in the spring of that year he set out with his wife, his departure being thus recorded in the public prints: "We understand that Flaxman, the sculptor, is about to leave his modest mansion in Wardour Street for Rome."

The effect of the Eternal City and its innumerable treasures of art on one who was himself a born classic, can well be imagined. His apprehension of the true dignity of art was immeasurably quickened by what he saw around him in the works of men who had done all that it was humanly possible to do with marble or stone, fresco or pigments. One thing particularly struck him: "That the mistress to whom the great artists of Italy had dedicated their genius was the Church—that they were unto her as chief priests, to interpret her tenets and her legends to the world in a more brilliant language than that of reliques and images"—and he seems to have evolved from this the determination to do something for the Catholic religion analogous to what his predecessors had done for the Romish Church. Commenting on this, one of his biographers remarks: "Those who examine the whole range of his works will see that they are in accordance with divine truth—that they embody poetic and moral passages from Scripture, and may be so arranged as to exhibit the whole history of Revelation, and the divine and moral dispensation of our Saviour. That he directed his studies to this great purpose we have his own assurance, and that, too, confirmed by almost innumerable designs, many of them wrought into monuments, and all intended for the furtherance of devotion."

But Flaxman's sojourn in Rome, which, by-the-bye, lasted for no less than seven years, was productive of other things more characteristic of his genius than the "furtherance of devotion," although had he not had his living to make, he would probably have given himself up

to those sacred subjects which always very strongly appealed to him. Three several patrons in Rome engaged him in undertaking a series of illustrations of Homer's "Iliad" and "Odyssey," the dramas of Æschylus, and Dante's "Divina Commedia." It is unnecessary to set down the various subjects chosen from this large and splendid field of poetry, and it will be sufficient to note that there were thirty-nine illustrations of the "Iliad," thirty-four of the "Odyssey," and that these were executed for a Mrs. Hare Nayler, who paid the sculptor the not extravagant sum of fifteen shillings for each design. It was not difficult or costly to earn the title of patron, in those days!

Small, however, as was the remuneration received by Flaxman for these fine original designs, it was more than compensated for by the reputation he gained by the works, not only when they had been recently finished and seen by the artistic circles in Rome, but also on their subsequent publication in book form, when they were brought out in 1805.* The series of outline drawings illustrating Dante's epic were undertaken for Thomas Hope, the well-known collector and critic, and author of "Anastasius." For these, which numbered in all one hundred and nine, Flaxman received but a guinea each. All of them are instinct with that touch of genius with which the sculptor vivified whatever he touched, but perhaps the most consummate are those illustrating the Inferno, although the Lucifer in one of them hardly rises beyond the grotesque. Like those to Homer, these drawings were published, in oblong folio, in 1807, and did much to extend Flaxman's reputation already established by the earlier series; while those to the tragedies of Æschylus commissioned by the Countess Spencer at a guinea each, which had been engraved by T. Piroli in 1795, in thirty-one outline plates, were later issued in 1831 with five additional drawings engraved by Frank Howard.

Considerable as such works were, when the number of illustrations, their large range of subject and their extra-

* "The Odyssey of Homer, engraved from the Compositions of J. Flaxman." Thirty-four fine outline plates. Oblong folio. 1805.

ordinary inventive power is remembered, they formed but a small portion of Flaxman's achievement during his sojourn in Rome. Much of his time was occupied in examining the remains of ancient sculpture, in making copies, and in noting down their intrinsic merits and their significance in the history of art. The sculptor has left many memoranda relating to these things, and one or two specimens may be given here, as showing how deep and careful was his method of study, and also as exhibiting the clear and forcible manner in which he expressed his views and conclusions. Of the ancient bas-reliefs he thus writes: "The ancient Sarcophagi present a magnificent collection of compositions from the great poets of antiquity, Homer, Hesiod, Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles—the systems of ancient philosophy with Greek mysteries, initiations, and mythology. The study of these will give the young artist the true principles of composition. By carefully observing them, he will accustom himself to a noble habit of thinking, and consequently choose whatever is beautiful, elegant, and grand; rejecting all that is mean and vulgar: by thus imbibing an electric spark of the poetic fire, he will attain the power of employing the beauty and grace of ancient poetry and genius in the service of the establishments and morals of our own time and country!"

And again, in one of his subsequent lectures on sculpture, Flaxman thus expresses the views he had gained while studying among the ancient remains of Rome:

"In early times in Greece, their figures were ordinary and barbarous, having only the rudest character of imitation, without any of its graces; their gods were distinguished by their symbols only—Jupiter by his thunderbolt—Neptune by his trident—and Mercury by his caduceus: not unfrequently these and other divinities were represented with wings, to show that they were not mere men. The symbols, attributes and personal characteristics, as the arts improved, were derived from the poets and influenced by philosophy. The early figures of Jupiter and Neptune have no beards, but

when Homer's verses became the canon of public opinion, the father of gods and men became bearded, and so did his brother Neptune. It is likely that Hercules was not exhibited with extraordinary muscular strength until the Greek tragedians had settled his character by their impassioned descriptions of his acts and labours. The winged genii on the Greek vases were introduced from the Pythagorean philosophy: and female divinities became lovely and gracious in the time of Plato—in fine, the different systems of philosophy influenced, as they appeared, the arts of design, giving a tone to their excellence and an indication of their character. The female divinities of those early days of sculpture were clothed in draperies divided into few and perpendicular folds; the hair of both male and female statues of this period is arranged with great care, collected in a club behind, sometimes entirely curled in the same manner as practised by the native Americans and the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands. Dædalus and Eudæus formed their statues of wood; metal was also used for various purposes of sculpture, as we learn from Homer, Hesiod, and Plutarch."*

There is no necessity to quote more, although so much more, equally sound and *documenté*, might be set down; but this extract will show how carefully Flaxman had trained himself in the literature of his subject, as well as how painstaking had been his investigations into the actual remains which he saw around him.

Besides the time expended on his drawings and his note-books, the sculptor was occupied in executing various commissions for patrons who had been largely attracted to him by his treatment of the epics of Homer and Dante, and who felt that here was one who possessed the true spirit of antiquity. Of such works was the small group in marble of "Cephalius and Aurora," which he produced for Thomas Hope; a colossal group representing "The Fury of Athamas," taken from Ovid's "Metamorphoses," for the fourth Earl of Bristol, who paid

* *See* Flaxman's "Lectures on Sculpture," with an address on the death of Flaxman, by Sir Richard Westmacott, 2nd edit., 1838.

£600 for it—a price which, relatively large as it was, was yet quite inadequate to the size and importance of the undertaking; * and the restoration of the fragmentary torso of Hercules.

Like nearly all such supposititious restorations, this latter was at best a thankless task. People are never quite satisfied with such *pastiches*, be they never so clever or "probable." Every one has, to some extent, his own preconceived ideas of what the unmutilated statue or group, as the case may be, should look like. When therefore Flaxman produced not merely a restored torso of Hercules, but a group in which Hercules was accompanied by Omphale, it is hardly to be wondered at that many regarded the work with ill-concealed scepticism, especially when it is remembered that this torso represents, in fragmentary form, one of the, if not the, finest achievements of ancient sculpture. It would seem that even Flaxman himself was not satisfied, for before his death he caused his restoration to be destroyed, and no amount of adverse criticism would have made him do this had he been wholly pleased with the result of his labours.

The sculptor's seven years' sojourn in Rome had been productive of far greater benefits to him, as an artist, than can be estimated by the relatively few commissions he received or the insignificant amount of money he made. It had enlarged his ideas; it had settled his artistic principles; it had qualified him to estimate the truth of abstract beauty; in a word it had formed of him, from natural material imbued with innate classicism, a classic in practice as well as in theory. He had mixed with artists and patrons, with men of genius and men of fashion; he had studied with reverent care the wonders with which Rome and its surroundings abound; he had, too, been elected a member of the Academies of Florence and Carrara; and he was now ready to return to England. The moment for doing so, 1792,

* Cunningham says that Flaxman must have lost some hundreds over this work, but that he never made any complaint. The group was placed at Ickworth, Lord Bristol's seat in Suffolk.

MONUMENT TO LORD MANSFIELD
By Flaxman

seems to have been chosen for other reasons than the fact that he had now done and seen all he wanted to see and do: the country was becoming unsettled; Napoleon Bonaparte's personality had already passed the Alps, and events were moving too quickly to allow of a peaceful stay for a foreigner—especially an Englishman—being much longer possible in Italy. Cunningham gives an interesting anecdote, as related to him by Flaxman, as illustrating the curiously gullible nature of the French people with regard to the intentions of Napoleon at this period.

"I remember," said the sculptor, "a night or two before my departure from Rome that the Ambassador of the French proudly showed us, at an evening party, a medal of Buonaparte. 'There,' said he, 'is the hero who is to shake the monarchies of the earth, and raise the glory of the Republic.' I looked at the head and said at once, 'This citizen Buonaparte of yours is the very image of Augustus Cæsar.' 'Image of a tyrant!' exclaimed the Frenchman—'no, indeed—I tell you he is another sort of a man—he is a young enthusiastic hero, and dreams of nothing but liberty and equality!'" And who knows but, at that time, he was?

On arriving in England, Flaxman took a small house in Buckingham Street, Fitzroy Square, added a studio to it, engaged assistants and workmen, and having put his possessions in order, awaited commissions. Considering that all the branches of sculpture—groups, monuments, and busts—were, at this moment, represented in England by three such eminent men as Banks, Bacon, and Nollekens, the step might have been regarded as a somewhat daring one. But Flaxman had a trump card in his hand already; this was an order to execute the monument to Lord Mansfield, which he had received while still in Rome.

This splendid work is in Westminster Abbey, and is certainly one of the finest examples of modern sculpture to be seen there. In the centre the great judge is shown seated,* while on either hand stand figures emblematic

* Flaxman copied the statue from Reynolds's portrait.

of Wisdom and Justice; behind is a recumbent youth, evidently representing one on whom sentence has been passed and whom Wisdom has delivered up to Justice. The conception of the whole thing is remarkably fine; and there is a kind of calm judicial air about it wholly in keeping with the great man whose memory it perpetuates so magnificently. When Banks saw it, he is said to have exclaimed, "This little man cuts us all out!"

It was probably the production of this fine piece of work that induced certain of Flaxman's friends and admirers to persuade him—and he required no little persuasion, it is said—to enter his name as a candidate for one of the Royal Academy Associateships. This, however, he did, with the result that he was immediately elected, the date of the diploma being 1797. In this year he sent to the exhibition three bas-reliefs representing subjects from the New Testament, together with his monument to Sir William Jones, which is now in University College Chapel, at Oxford. Three years later, the sculptor became a full Royal Academician, and as his Diploma work sent in a marble group representing "Apollo and Marpessa," in which the design, as was not infrequently the case with Flaxman, excels the actual execution; for it is known that he was never consummate in the art of chiselling.

Flaxman was now entering on that period of his career in which he reached the zenith of his fame, and from these years date many of his finest achievements; before, however, saying anything about these, a circumstance deserves mention, as properly falling into its place here. There had been a suggestion that a great Naval Pillar should be erected to commemorate the victories gained at sea by Great Britain. Such a scheme opened up vistas of splendid ideas to Flaxman, whose mind has been described as teeming with magnificent projects and who, in this respect, may be regarded as the Wren of sculpture. No sooner was the proposal for a Naval Pillar broached, than he came forward with the suggestion that such a monument should take the form of a figure of Britannia, 200 ft. in height, and that the

position it should occupy was Greenwich Hill. Not only did he produce "A Sketch for a colossal statue of Britannia Triumphant," as he called it, but also expanded his suggestion in "A letter to the Committee for raising the Naval Pillar or Monument, under the patronage of the Duke of Gloucester." In this he conclusively proved the desirability of such a memorial and backed up his argument by wise saws culled from the classics and modern instances from his own experience. Nothing, however, came of the suggested monument, and Flaxman was regarded as a visionary by many, and also, by those who did not know him, as one who wanted to advertise himself and put money in his own pocket. All who were familiar with the sculptor's character, however, knew that self-seeking was the very last thing he could be accused of, while those who recognised the extent of his capacity were equally satisfied that he would have been capable of carrying into effect even the colossal work which he had suggested.

Some of the more important works which Flaxman did achieve at this time have now to be noticed. Of these was the monument to the Baring family, in Micheldever Church. As was frequently the case with the sculptor, when called upon to execute memorials of the dead, he was accustomed to take some appropriate text and to weave around it, as it were, the ideas to which it gave birth. In this case the words from the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done—thy Kingdom come—deliver us from evil," were so employed, the first words being illustrated by a life-size figure in the attitude of prayer and resignation; the second phrase being embodied in a mother and child ascending to heaven and being greeted by angels; the third, by a male figure floating in the air, while good and bad spirits fight for the possession of his soul. The whole conception is striking; indeed this monument has been considered one of the most beautiful examples of *motionless* poetry to be found in England. Another fine work was his memorial to Miss Mary Lushington, of Lewisham, based on the text, "Blessed are they that mourn," and representing

a mother weeping for her dead daughter, and comforted by an angel. Other texts incorporated into such works as this were "Come, thou blessed," "Lead us not into temptation," and the famous "Charity," the crown, some will consider, of his output.

Flaxman also executed a very fine monument to his one-time patroness, the Countess Spencer, in which are shown beautiful representations of Faith and Charity; to Mrs. Tighe, the poetess; to the Yarborough family, of Street Thorpe, Yorkshire, whereon are exhibited two female figures in the act of distributing alms; and to Edward Balme, representing an old man imparting instruction to two youths. Flaxman himself is said to have always considered that these last two works were, in this genre, the most successful he had ever produced. What Cunningham calls "the most singular" of his performances, was his monument to the Rev. Mr. Clowes, which was erected in St. John's Church, Manchester, during the clergyman's lifetime. It represents him instructing Age, Maturity, and Childhood in religion, and is said to have made a strong impression at the time of its erection. Among other works of this kind scattered about in churches and chapels all over the country, I will confine myself to recording those to Dr. Warton, headmaster of Winchester, in Winchester Cathedral: to Sir Percy Jennings, in Lyndhurst Church; to Arabella, Duchess of Dorset, who died in 1815, in the Sackville Chapel, at Knole; to Lady Fitzharris, in Christ Church Priory; to Mr. Arnold, in Niton Church, Isle of Wight; to the Sergison family, in Cuckfield Church;* and a circular medallion to Elizabeth Cleobury, died 1777, in Marlow Church, which, I think, may be attributed to Flaxman, with every degree of probability, although it is not signed.

Of what may be called historical monuments, that is, monuments to those who have distinguished themselves in the service of the country, the sculptor produced a considerable number; but they cannot be regarded as among his best works. He does not seem to have

* There is also a monument by Bacon to a member of this family here.

quite put his heart into such things, as he did when he was able to illustrate a text from Holy Writ, or embody his conception of the heroes of antiquity—the protagonists of Homer or Æschylus, Euripides or Sophocles. He had to rely on the old tags, as it were; allegory he could not dispense with, bringing in its train trophies and palms, and the ubiquitous British Lion; he did not care for such things, but the public would have them, and their rather tawdry heaviness overweighted his classic chisel and seem to have dried up the inspiration which flowed so copiously when he dealt with better-loved subjects.

Of such may be mentioned those to Captain Montague, in Westminster Abbey, with its two immense lions; to Captain Millar, with its palms and medallions and figures of Britannia and Victory; to Captains Walker and Beckett (a joint memorial); to Earl Howe, a work on which the sculptor laboured for months after it was erected, to try and make it less heavy, with but partial success; and to Nelson, who, dressed in the pelisse given him by the Grand Signor, is pointed out as an example, by Britannia, to two young sailors.

Cunningham thus criticises these and kindred examples of what may be called Flaxman's official output:

"Though some of the accessories are not without merit," he writes, "and some of the figures are full of graceful simplicity, the cold abstract personification triumphs over all. In these works that want of polish, which with those who look to the surface forms a serious drawback to the merits of Flaxman, is visible enough; but there is a more injurious effect still—an occasional absence of true proportion, which no emendation can remedy."

The fact that the sculptor was accustomed to work his marble from half-size models may be held accountable for these infrequent lapses in proportion, although so true was his eye and so cultivated his taste that he was saved from falling into error more often than a less able worker would have been; and the fact that where he did so fall was in work nearly always of this official character,

is an additional proof that his heart was never really in it.

About this time Flaxman paid another visit to the Continent, but did not go beyond Paris, where, at this period, so many of the masterpieces of ancient art had been gathered together as the spoils of the all-conquering Napoleon. The sculptor had no love for the Emperor or his ways, but he could hardly help taking advantage of the splendid collections which Napoleon had caused to be housed in the Louvre, and which were now so conveniently placed for the study of Northern Europe. It is said that the painter David made friendly overtures to Flaxman, on the occasion of his stay in Paris, but that the latter would have nothing to do with one who had been associated with the Jacobin Club.

Some of Flaxman's other more notable works remain to be spoken of. For the East India House, whose liberality the sculptor was fond of extolling, he executed a series of statues of those famous men who had extended the power and importance of that great company: Warren Hastings, Lord Cornwallis, Coote, Wellesley, the Marquis of Hastings, and others were thus perpetuated. The sculptor also produced one of the finest of his statues—that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, in which the dignity of the great President is well preserved, and his worship of Michael Angelo indicated by the medallion of the painter-sculptor affixed to the side of the pedestal against which he stands.*

Another work in this genre was the colossal statue of Sir John Moore, in bronze, which was set up in Glasgow. Cunningham gives as a reason why this work fails somehow to impress, the fact that in the various processes necessary for its production, the sculptor's design of presenting an heroic figure, as it were escaped, with the result that the statue is heavy and uninspired. Another example of Flaxman's "statuary" is the William Pitt, also at Glasgow. This, no more than the representation of the hero of Corunna, can be said to be wholly successful.

* This fine statue is in St. Paul's, where other works by Flaxman may be seen.

The fact is that Flaxman was not at his best when portraying contemporary figures attired in nineteenth-century costume. When he was allowed to garb his subjects in the flowing togas of ancient Italy or Greece he was in his element; he felt he was portraying classical subjects even if the features were those of men of his own day; but when he was obliged to fit them into coats and trousers or breeches, and had to represent every button and every seam, his inspiration deserted him, and he became, for the nonce, no better than any ordinary journeyman sculptor.

Better than these two statues was that of Joseph Warton instructing three pupils, and that of George Steevens, the great Shakespearean scholar; while the statue of that Rajah of Tanjore who has been referred to in the last chapter, and of the famous missionary Schwartz, to whose labours the Rajah's subjects owed so much in the way of enlightenment, are both said to have been as good as anything Flaxman produced in this direction. Of the numerous busts he executed may be mentioned those of Nelson, in the United Service Club; of Kemble and Paoli, in Westminster Abbey; and of John Hunter, in the Royal College of Surgeons. But the sculptor's genius exhibited itself far better in those friezes and bas-reliefs in which he was able to give full vent to his love of the classics; in which he could portray his conceptions of the heroes of Homer and Hesiod, and of those who figured in the soul-stirring dramas of Æschylus and Sophocles.*

In 1810,† the Royal Academy endowed a Professorship of Sculpture, and Flaxman was elected to fill the chair. The selection was a good one, for no other sculptor, of the time, was so well qualified to lecture on the past history of the art, nor could one have been found whose reading was so wide and varied and so well suited to illustrate such a theme. Flaxman delivered his first

* It is interesting to know that Flaxman designed and decorated the ceiling of 28 Soho Square, the only example, so far as I am aware, of such work from his hand.

† He had been elected an A.R.A. in 1797 and an R.A. in 1800.

discourse in 1811, and the ten lectures forming the series were occupied with the following subjects: (1) English Sculpture; (2) Egyptian Sculpture; (3) Grecian Sculpture; (4) Science; (5) Beauty; (6) Composition; (7) Style; (8) Drapery; (9) Ancient Art; (10) Modern Art. These lectures have been printed, and there is therefore no necessity for me to load these pages with extracts. It will be, I think, sufficient to state that they are all characterised by a clear and vigorous, if sometimes a rather heavy, style; that they exhibit a thorough grasp of the subject; and that they are illustrated by such extracts as were to be expected from Flaxman's extensive acquaintance with ancient literature. Much in them is, of course, of a technical character, unsuited, and often naturally obscure, to the general reader, but there is so much of vivid interest, so many references to great writers and artists and their works, that they deserve, in their printed form, a wider recognition than they appear to have received. When delivered, they were listened to with keen interest and attention, and we are told with what loud applause the sculptor was greeted when he entered the lecture room to deliver the first of the series. Fuseli is said to have suddenly remembered, while at table, that one was to be given. "Farewell, friends—farewell, wine—farewell, wit," he is reported to have exclaimed, "I must leave you all, and hear sermon the first preached by the Reverend John Flaxman." The jesting remark really contains a certain *nuance* of sound criticism; for Flaxman's grave manner, his calm and unimpassioned style of declamation, his sedate bearing, really gave rather the idea of a sermon on art, than of the utterances of one to whom art was all in all, and who, had he been a Fuseli or a Barry or a Blake, would have aroused his audience to the highest pitch of excitement, and have inoculated even the most unimpressionable with something of his own fiery vehemence.

Campbell, the poet, thus criticised Flaxman's lectures:

"We owe," he writes, "duties of allowance to superior as well as to inferior minds; and it occurred to me,

in judging of these Lectures, we are bound to guard ourselves against exaggerated expectations, which no great artist in teaching his art can fulfil. It is not merely that a book on Sculpture can never move us like great achievements in Sculpture itself, but that the ethereal essence of that skill by which the magician touched us in his works being untransferable to words, he must be mainly employed in communicating the plainer rules of his art, and in this didactic vocation we must not expect that he should wear the same mantle of inspiration as an author which invested him as an artist. It is fearfully difficult to be eloquent in teaching art. The flow of didactic language, constructed for the thread of sober ideas, is perilously shaken by the tramp of impassioned enthusiasm. Flaxman is all sobriety of style, and he is blamed for dryness and coldness. There is no such thing as pleasing everybody; and particularly in bequests from great men, the imagination is apt to be a greedy legatee, unbounded in hope, and querulous in expectation."

Besides these lectures, Flaxman wrote a considerable amount bearing on his art. Thus the "Character" of Romney's works, incorporated in Hayley's life of the painter, is from his pen, as are a number of articles—to be precise, those on Armour, *Basso-relievo*, Beauty, Bronze, Busts, Composition, Cast, and Ceres, in Rees's "Cyclopædia"; while he illustrated with pen and pencil the supposititious history of a certain Chinese Casket, which he had purchased in 1812, and which became, for a time, the amusement of his leisure hours. He also produced, in addition to his better-known drawings to Homer, Æschylus, and Dante, sets illustrating "The Pilgrim's Progress," Sotheby's translation of "Oberon," and thirty-six designs to Hesiod, which Cunningham regards as rivalling "for simplicity, loveliness, and grace," any of his other productions in this genre. One of the designs indeed was thought so highly of by Flaxman himself, a fastidious critic of his own work, that he reproduced it in relief; it is that one representing Mercury carrying Pandora from heaven to earth.

To the latter years of Flaxman's life belong some of his most notable productions. Among these may be named his statues of Psyche and the Pastoral Apollo; of Michael Angelo and Raphael; and his great group of the Archangel Michael overcoming Satan, which he executed for Lord Egremont, and which a consensus of praise has allowed to be a masterpiece. This was practically his last achievement, and fittingly rounded off his splendid output. Some years before he modelled it he was engaged on that famous Shield of Achilles which is, perhaps, better known than much of his production in pure sculpture. It was a commission from the great silversmiths, Rundell and Bridge, in 1818, and has been thus described:

"Round the border of the shield he first wrought the sea: in breadth about three fingers—wave follows wave in quiet undulation—he knew that a boisterous ocean would disturb the repose and harmony of the rest of the work. On the central boss he has represented Apollo, or the Sun, in his chariot—the horses seem starting forward and the god bursting out in beauty to give light to the universe around him. The circle of which Apollo is the centre is in diameter little more than a foot, yet in this space he has pictured

> ". . . The earth, the heaven, the sea,
> The sun that rests not, and the moon full-orbed.
> There also all the stars, which round about
> As with a radiant frontlet bind the skies;
> The Pleiads and the Hyads, and the might
> Of huge Orion, with him Ursa called,
> Known also by his popular name, the Wain.

"On the twelve celebrated scenes which fill the space in the shield between the ocean-border and the general representation of the universe, he exhausted all his learning and expended all his strength. The figures are generally about six inches high, and vary in relief from the smallest visible swell, to half an inch. There is a convexity of six inches from the plane; and the whole contains upwards of an hundred human figures."

Flaxman received £620 for the designs and model of

this fine work. Rundell and Bridge reproduced it in silver-gilt for George IV. at the price of £2000; the king ordered a replica, which he gave to the Duke of York, and two others were executed for the Earl of Lonsdale and the Duke of Northumberland respectively. Two were made in bronze, and of the three plaster casts, one went to the Royal Academy, one to Sir Thomas Lawrence, and one was kept by the sculptor himself.

The execution of this shield and the production of the Michael and Satan not only fitly round off Flaxman's achievement, but also well represent the most notable directions in which his genius fulfilled itself—his labours in sculpture and his remarkable power of rendering incidents in bas-relief; and it was in this twofold success that he rose so much higher than any of his contemporaries and exhibited something of that wide range which characterised the great artists of early days—the Michael Angelos, the Leonardos, the Ghibertis.

About two years after the completion of the Achilles shield, Flaxman lost his wife, who had been his inseparable companion and his intelligent helpmate for thirty-eight years. She died in 1820, and the grief-stricken sculptor never seems to have quite recovered from the loss he then sustained. Fame and prosperity were his, but, like Johnson in similar circumstances, he could justly and sadly say that he was now alone. He had, indeed, many friends—Hayley and Banks and Romney; Howard and Stothard; Thomas Hope and Samuel Rogers—but the best of them could ill replace his lost companion.

Cunningham tells us how he met Flaxman in 1825, and how the sculptor asked him to visit his studio to see the statue of Burns he was then engaged upon. "Our talk," says Cunningham, "was all concerning poetry and poets—he listened—well pleased, to my description of the person of Burns, and said 'a manly man, and his poetry is like him.'"

On December 2 in the same year, a visitor called to see the sculptor, giving as his excuse the fact that an Italian friend had written a book and desired him to

present a copy to Flaxman. On opening the volume, the sculptor found that it was dedicated to himself, in these words, "Al Ombra di Flaxman," the author having shared the then general belief in Italy that Flaxman was dead. The following day the sculptor went, as usual, to church, but on returning felt chilled and retired to bed. On the Monday he rose, and told his sister-in-law, who kept house for him, that he was quite well enough to receive certain guests who had been invited to dinner on that day. When they arrived, they all, with one accord, observed how ill and altered he looked. The fact was that the chill had developed into inflammation of the lungs, and though everything was done to ward off the malady, it made such rapid strides that on the following Thursday morning, December 7, 1826, Flaxman passed peacefully away, sitting in his chair.

On December 15 his body was interred in the churchyard of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, in the presence of the President and Council of the Royal Academy and of many of the friends and colleagues who had loved and respected him and admired his wonderful gifts during his lifetime, and mourned the loss of so quiet, gentle, and unassuming a man.

On his tomb were inscribed the following words: "John Flaxman, R.A., P.S.; whose mortal life was a constant preparation for a blessed immortality: his angelic spirit returned to the Divine Giver on the 7th of December 1826, in the seventy-second year of his age."

Posthumous epitaphs are wont to protest too much, frequently enough, but in this case what was written on Flaxman's grave seems to have been borne out by his life. He was an essentially devout man, and although as a member of the Church of England he became imbued with the doctrines of Swedenborg, his life was a proof that sectarianism never affected his belief, and never prevented him from leading a pure and devout life. Rather, perhaps, it showed that he was not content to follow a merely comfortable creed, but had thought deeply and earnestly on such things, and had caught glimpses of heaven by means of the amiable visionary,

which he might not have done had he relied on more recognised doctrines.

In appearance Flaxman was small in stature—Nollekens, it will be remembered, used to call him "little Flaxman"; he walked with a halting gait, the remains of his early lameness. His forehead was high and fine; his eyes, large and eloquent, sparkled when he talked or became excited, and though in repose his face had a rather proud and severe expression, it was lighted up by a beautiful smile which irradiated his features and played about his mobile mouth. Jackson painted his portrait, by which the outward man is excellently portrayed, and Baily and Dance * had both modelled his bust some years earlier.

His manners were quiet and unassuming; he affected no opulence either in his dress or his establishment; he was just a plain English gentleman in bearing and in act, who happened also to be endowed with what we are accustomed to term genius, and who, by his remarkable gifts, took his place among the greatest of modern sculptors. He was inaccessible to praise or blame, diffident but not retiring, and as plain as a peasant in his dress. The artist who so described him added, "and were you to try any other ingredients, may I be hanged if you would form so glorious a creature"; while on a working mason once being asked his opinion of the sculptor, he replied that "he was the best master God ever made." Surely no man could wish a better epitaph! What he was in his earlier days of struggle, so he remained to the last when prosperity, that mixed blessing, had taken him by the hand.

One who knew him intimately during that earlier period has thus described his simple home:

"I remember him well, so do I his wife, and also his humble little house in Wardour Street. All was neat—nay, elegant—the figures from which he studied were the finest antiques—the nature which he copied was the fairest that could be had—and all in his studio was in propriety and order. But what struck me most was the air of devout quiet which reigned everywhere—the models

* Now in the Diploma Gallery.

which he made, and the designs which he drew were not more serene than he was himself, and his wife had that meek composure of manner which he so much loved in art. Yet better than all was the devout feeling of this singular man—there was no ostentatious display of piety—nay, he was in some sort a lover of mirth and sociality—but he was a reader of the Scriptures and a worshipper of sincerity, and if ever Purity visited the earth she resided with John Flaxman."

Sir Thomas Lawrence has left us the following criticism of Flaxman's achievement. Much has been written about the sculptor's works, but Lawrence's summary seems to embrace all that is best worth remembering.

"The elements of Flaxman's style were founded on Grecian art—on its noblest principles—on its deeper intellectual power, and not on the mere surface of its skill. Though master of its purest lines, he was still more the sculptor of sentiment than of form, and whilst the philosopher, the statesman, and the hero were treated by him with appropriate dignity, not even in Raphael have the gentler feelings and sorrows of human nature been treated with more touching pathos than in the various designs and models of this inestimable man. Like the greatest of modern painters, he delighted to trace from the actions of familiar life the lines of sentiment and passion; and from the populous haunts and momentary peacefulness of poverty and want, to form his inestimable groups of childhood and maternal tenderness with those nobler compositions from Holy Writ, as beneficent in their motive as they were novel in design. In piety the minds of Michael Angelo and Flaxman were the same—I dare not assert their equality in art.

"His purity of taste led him early in life to the study of the noblest reliques of antiquity, and a mind, though not then of classic education, but of classic bias, urged him to the perusal of the best translations of the Greek philosophers and poets, till it became deeply imbued with those simple and grand sentiments which distinguished the productions of that favoured people. He has penetrated into the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' with a far

deeper sense of the majesty of Homer than his great contemporary Canova, who dedicated his whole life to the renovation of the antique; but indeed he never failed to catch the peculiar inspiration of whatever poet his fancy selected for illustration. We own the group at once as the offspring of the spirit of Homer or Æschylus or Dante; and the engravings from these works have given Flaxman a more truly European reputation than perhaps any other English sculptor has as yet achieved."

CHAPTER XII

CHANTREY

The name of Chantrey is the most illustrious one in the annals of British sculpture. It is that which is directly remembered, to the exclusion of all but one or two—Flaxman's and Grinling Gibbon's, for instance—when we speak of this phase of art as exemplified by Englishmen or those who have become identified by residence and labour with this country. The nature of the man had in itself something so akin to the best national characteristics; he was at once so forceful yet so modest; so upright and diligent; so painstaking and so determined to succeed; and his achievement was so remarkable—direct, simple, wholly opposed to all factitious striving after success—that he came and took his foremost place among English sculptors unchallenged, and retained it to the end unquestioned. His work and his life both stand as splendid examples of the ultimate success to be gained without adventitious aid, by those who impart an added force to natural gifts, by unremitting study and industry.

Francis Chantrey was born on April 7, 1781, at Jordansthorpe, a village in the parish of Norton, Derbyshire. His father was a small farmer, to which calling he added that of carpenter and joiner, while his mother was a daughter of Martin Leggitt, of Okeover, in Staffordshire. The elder Chantrey seems to have inherited his farm from his father, the first Francis Chantrey, who held it from the Offleys of Norton, as his son and grandson did after him. The Chantrey family were able to trace back their descent a respectable way, but they were always of small yeoman stock, and do not appear ever to have owned property of their own or to have been, at any time, in

opulent circumstances, as has been suggested by more than one of the sculptor's biographers.

Young Chantrey was the elder of two boys, his brother Thomas dying while yet a child. He was baptized in Norton Church on May 27, and in process of time was sent to a dame's school in the village, although at the early age of six he had made sufficient progress to be transferred to a larger school kept by one Thomas Fox. It is not, perhaps, surprising to learn that even in these early days the boy was fond of filling the margins of his books with sketches, and that he preferred such methods of employing his time to troubling his head about "the three Rs." Nor does his father, an easy-going, convivially minded man, ever ready with a song or a joke, appear to have troubled himself about his son's education, beyond recognising its necessity, by sending him to school, for he was accustomed to minimise its advantages by keeping the boy at home at all sorts of times and employing him to drive a donkey bearing the farm produce —milk, butter, &c.—into Sheffield; which, not unpleasant as such an occupation may have been to young Chantrey (anything is preferable to most children to book-learning), was hardly conducive to educational proficiency.

When the boy was twelve years old his father died (March 1793), at the early age of forty-five, and was buried in Norton Churchyard. This event was very detrimental to young Chantrey, for it resulted in his mother marrying again, a circumstance in itself generally fraught with danger to the children of the earlier marriage, but in this case still more unfortunate, as the new head of the Chantrey household, one Job Hale, who had been a servant on the farm, was an illiterate, though worthy man, and was little likely to realise the necessity of a careful training for the boy, still less to recognise his latent talent. Indeed Hale probably thought he was fulfilling his duties by his step-son and advancing his prospects, when he suggested that he should be apprenticed to one Ebenezer Birks, a grocer in Sheffield, who was a distant relation of his own.

Young Chantrey was now sixteen, and he found out in a very short time that such an employment as that of serving behind a counter was little suited to his taste. Luckily he was able to make his mother and his step-father see this also, and he was withdrawn from the shop, whither he had been sent with a view to a formal apprenticeship, should he have shown an inclination for such a calling, and placed with Mr. Ramsay, a carver and gilder of Sheffield, to which business he had expressed himself anxious to be apprenticed, having been attracted by two small figures of Faith and Charity, modelled by one James Taylor, which stood in the window of Ramsay's establishment.* Articles were accordingly drawn up in the following terms on September 19, 1797, "between Francis Chantrey, of Norton, in the County of Derby, and Job Hale, of Norton aforesaid, farmer, and Thomas Fox, of Norton aforesaid, schoolmaster, friends of the said Francis Chantrey, of the one part, and Robert Ramsay, of Sheffield, in the county of York, carver and gilder, of the other part, witnesseth—that the said Francis Chantrey, of his own good liking, and by and with the counsel of his friends, hath put, bound, and by these presents doth put and bind himself servant," &c. The term of apprenticeship was seven years, ten pounds being paid down on the signing of the indenture, and fifty pounds were to be paid, on either side, on a breach of the covenants.

This circumstance may be said to have been the turning-point in Chantrey's career, and its significance can hardly be over-estimated. Ramsay was a man of some cultivation, and besides being a carver, dealt in plaster models, prints, and other artistic properties. His shop was therefore one where those fond of such things were wont to foregather, and young Chantrey was thus brought into contact with many people interested in art, who afterwards influenced and helped him at the beginning of his career as a sculptor; there were not a few who remembered the boy making models with the butter

* Chantrey afterwards carved the two figures flanking the door of Sheffield Infirmary from these very models.

on his mother's farm, who afterwards lived to see him producing the finest sculpture in the kingdom. Among these was Mr. Daniel Brammall, a well-known manufacturer of Sheffield, whose name deserves to be recorded because of the interest he took in young Chantrey, and because of his attempts to secure a situation suited to the boy's temperament.

In Ramsay's establishment Chantrey found himself in a congenial atmosphere. Not only was he surrounded by casts and prints and specimens of carving, but some of the workmen who laboured with him were cultivated men who were able and willing to give him a helping hand: thus from Jonathan Wilson, who afterwards migrated to London and engraved medals with success, he was taught drawing; while from the James Taylor whose two figures had first attracted him, in Ramsay's window, he received the rudiments of modelling; the use of colours he gained from an Irishman named Halpine, who painted miniatures, not without success.

Chantrey also obtained further experience by accompanying Ramsay and Taylor on some of their journeys to large houses in the neighbourhood, which they were engaged in decorating, such, for instance, as Renishaw Hall, then being rebuilt by Sir Sitwell Sitwell, and Wentworth House, the seat of Lord Fitzwilliam. On these occasions he was not only able to gain practical knowledge but was also made acquainted with the works of the sculptors and carvers of an earlier day. To these sources of enlarging his mind was added his unremitting industry in Ramsay's premises. There he was continually practising with his pencil and even trying his prentice hand on modelling, during his spare moments, and so skilful did he become that his fellow apprentices regarded him as one who would make a name for himself; although it is little likely that any one of them would have dared to predict such fame for him as he afterwards attained.

The story is told of how he persuaded one of Ramsay's workmen to allow him to take a cast from his face. The man lay on the floor and Chantrey proceeded to pour over his head a quantity of composition; but the novelty

of the proceeding was too much for the victim, and as the plaster hardened, he could restrain himself no longer, and tore off the mask, declaring that it was "throttling him." But the embryo sculptor was not to be defeated by such a failure, and he immediately lay down himself, and submitted to the process with better patience.

It may be imagined that a youth who was continually experimentalising on his own account, and who did not, probably, confine his investigations strictly to his leisure hours, was not such an ideal apprentice as Ramsay had a right to expect, and when we are told that the master and his pupil did not always agree as amicably as might be, we can quite understand it. The fact was that Chantrey, although he had escaped a worse drudgery, and had, indeed, gained much by his connection with Ramsay, was not yet in his element. He made the best of his opportunities for studying art, by private industry and by observing such things as were around him, but he was made for a larger world than that contained within the four walls of the Sheffield carver and gilder's establishment, and there is no doubt that he revolved in his mind how he could honourably escape from his indentures of apprenticeship. He seems to have been largely influenced in this by John Raphael Smith, an *habitué* of Ramsay's shop, and known to the world as a distinguished draughtsman in crayon. There seems little doubt that if Smith did not actively assist Chantrey in the matter, the conversations between the two finally actuated the youth in making a determined effort for freedom. The result was that, having obtained the sum of £50 through the kindness of a friend—some say a Mr. Jenkins, who had also been intimate with the elder Chantrey; others, a Mr. Raworth of Rycroft, a relation—he was able by the payment of this sum to cancel his agreement with Ramsay and to call himself a free man.

This event took place in the early part of 1802, and in the April of that year we find him in Sheffield painting portraits. In the *Sheffield Iris* for April 22, 1802, appeared the following notice: "F. Chantrey, with all due deference, begs permission to inform the ladies

and gentlemen of Sheffield and its vicinity that, during his stay here, he wishes to employ his time in taking of portraits in crayons and miniatures, at the pleasure of the person who shall do him the honour to sit. F. C., though a young artist, has had the opportunity of acquiring improvement from a strict attention to the works and productions of Messrs. Smith, Arnold, &c., gentlemen of eminence. He trusts in being happy to produce good and satisfactory likenesses, and no exertion shall be wanting on his part to render his humble efforts deserving some small share of public patronage. Terms —from two to three guineas. 24 Paradise Square." That Chantrey obtained no little patronage is proved by the number of portraits in oil as well as in crayon which he produced about this time. Many of the well-known inhabitants of Sheffield and the district sat to him, and Holland is able to give particulars of no fewer than seventy-two portraits which Chantrey executed, one of the first being a crayon sketch of his own head, probably produced as a specimen of his powers.* By this means he made a little money, and having borrowed something more from his friends, he determined to try his fortune in London. On his arrival in the Metropolis, he went to the only relative he possessed there, an uncle who was in service as a butler, from whom he probably received further assistance. This uncle was named Wale, and both he and his wife were in the service of Mrs. D'Oyley,† of Curzon Street, Mayfair. To the making their acquaintance Chantrey owed two things. In the first place he there and then fell in love with their daughter Mary, who subsequently became his wife; and in the second, he was very kindly received by Mrs. D'Oyley herself, who not only insisted that the "Boy of Genius," as she called him, should partake of a meal in her house

* When Chantrey eventually went to London, he left this portrait with his mother as a keepsake.

† Mrs. D'Oyley was the granddaughter of Sir Hans Sloane and widow of Christopher D'Oyley, of Southrap, Gloucestershire. She died at Twickenham on November 28, 1821, at the age of ninety-six. As Holland says, "her name should be mentioned with respect in any memoir of Chantrey."

every day, but should also have a room, there, placed at his disposal, in which he could prosecute his work undisturbed. Soon after this Chantrey is found setting up as a portrait painter—rather as a means to an end than as an end. He had found this the most remunerative branch of art to which he could turn his attention while in Sheffield, and he thought that it might also keep the pot boiling in London, until such time as he could make a name in the path he had already determined to follow —that of sculpture. As I have said, no fewer than seventy-two portraits from his brush are known to exist dating from his Sheffield days, and he certainly produced a considerable number in London. If none of these can be said to be of great importance, they at least kept the wolf from the door, and one of them, a portrait of his uncle, Daniel Wale, was actually hung in the Royal Academy of 1804.

It would seem that Fortune did not smile on him yet, for after staying but a few months in London, he determined to try his luck in Dublin, and in the following August set out for that city. A letter dated August 18, written by Chantrey to Mr. Jackson of Sheffield, tells of his safe arrival after a stormy passage. He had, as a companion, Taylor, the carver, already alluded to, and he asks his correspondent to direct his answer to him at "The Countess Clare's, Bagot Street, Dublin," so that it seems probable that his short stay in London had already been productive of advantageous friendships. He speaks of remaining three weeks in Dublin, but he had not been there many days before he contracted a fever which at one time threatened to prove fatal. However, he recovered, but when he did so he had lost his hair and he remained bald for the rest of his life. It is said that this misfortune resulted in his exhibiting a striking resemblance to the busts of Shakespeare, and he once laughingly remarked, in later days, that "Shakespeare might have been the ruin of me, for when I was young and knew no better, I had been told I was like his picture, and that notion very nearly made me a coxcomb."

Little success attended Chantrey's Irish visit; indeed,

a large part of it must have been spent in bed, and he returned to London, by way of Edinburgh, where he received no better encouragement, and set up as a wood-carver, a step nearer his goal, perhaps, but still far enough off. In this capacity he did some work for Rogers the poet, and the latter tells how, many years after, when the sculptor had become famous and was dining in St. James's Place with a distinguished company, he pointed out to his host a certain cabinet, and reminded him that it was he (Chantrey) who had executed it and placed it in position.

During this time, Chantrey, although ostensibly a wood-carver, was quietly and assiduously studying to become a sculptor, during his leisure hours. Like the scholar gipsy, he had

> . . . *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire,

and nothing turned him from its accomplishment. He might step aside, in order to keep body and soul together, to alien occupations, but he had determined to be a sculptor, and all his energies and purposeful determination were bent towards compassing this one all-absorbing object. In order, also, to lessen the time before he should be able to turn his whole attention to sculpture, Chantrey again occupied himself with portrait-painting, and he added to his already arduous occupations, by becoming a pupil at the Royal Academy schools, where he learnt to draw and model, although it is said that he never regularly entered his name as a student. At this period he was accustomed to make clay models of the human figure, on which he draped pieces of cloth, in order to study the best way of representing the folds produced. After having made a model and thus covered it, he would destroy it and begin another arranged differently, and so on ; gradually learning by experience the best method of portraying not merely the human form, but the most artistic manner of representing the drapery that covered it.

Such multifarious labours might seem impossible did we not know that Chantrey was always a most industrious

worker, and once declared that in his boyish days he had "mowed an acre of grass in a day; had thrashed a quarter of corn in a day; and had ploughed an acre of land in a day," and such energy, turned into a different channel, might easily have produced the artist who carved, painted portraits, modelled figures and studied in the art school, at a later period.

It is not quite satisfactorily proved when Chantrey first began to attend the Academy school, or what was the extent of his connection with it, but certainly during the early autumn of 1804, he was a pretty constant visitor there. He, however, returned to Sheffield before Christmas, and, with the exception of a visit to London to see the Spring Exhibition, passed the following year in Yorkshire.

As in the case of portrait-painting, so in that of sculpture, Chantrey made known his claims by a public advertisement, and in the *Sheffield Iris* for October 18, 1804, we read that "F. Chantrey respectfully solicits the patronage of the ladies and gentlemen of Sheffield and its environs, in the above arts" ("Sculpture and Portrait Painting" it is headed) "during the recess of the Royal Academy, which he hopes to merit from the specimens he has to offer to their attention at his apartments, No. 14, Norfolk Street. As models from life are not generally attempted in this country, F. C. hopes to meet the Liberal sentiments of an impartial public."

Among those who sat to Chantrey for busts, &c., at this period, were Dr. William Younge, Mr. Hunt, a drawing-master, and James Wheat, a solicitor, all residents in Sheffield, while the sculptor made a cast of the face of the Rev. James Wilkinson, who died in the January of the following year, at Boroughbridge, whither Chantrey set out on horseback (covering ninety miles) to accomplish the task. This he afterwards repeated in marble, the first he ever so executed. Holland, speaking of these works, says that their exhibition, together with others, may be said to have formed an era not only in the life of the artist, but in the history of Sheffield.

In Sheffield Chantrey continued to paint portraits

and to improve himself in modelling and casting, while he is also known to have attended a series of lectures on elocution, delivered by Thelwall, and a course of "Conversations" on art, given by Cary; besides attending many local gaieties, and making excursions with friends in the neighbourhood. One of these jaunts, which took place in the autumn of 1806, is interesting because Chantrey with his companions, a Mr. Ward and a Mr. Mason, travelled about in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and while one of the party recorded their experiences with the pen, the sculptor sketched and illustrated their wanderings, much as Hogarth and his companions had done at an earlier day. Details of this portion of the sculptor's career may be read in Holland's excellent "Memorials," where so much of local interest connected with his early life is to be found. The sketch-book which Chantrey filled on this occasion was in the possession of Mr. Mason till his death, when it was returned to the sculptor. Besides these instructive amusements, Chantrey was on one occasion introduced to one of the meetings of the club "for the Promotion of Mutual Improvement" of which the local historian, Joseph Hunter, was then secretary; at another time he was present at the festivities connected with the coming of age of Lord Milton, eldest son of Earl Fitzwilliam, at Wentworth House, when he is said to have been so struck by the grotesqueness of the groups of country folk who, on their return, lined the high-road in every state of intoxication, that he constantly stopped and made sketches of them. Indeed, nothing seems to have escaped him on such occasions, and he was continually noting mentally or in his sketch-book the unconsidered trifles of life which he saw around him.

Chantrey's first *imaginative* work, as Jones calls it, was the model of a "Head of Satan"—which was not exhibited in the Royal Academy till 1808. It had, however, been executed much earlier; indeed, the sculptor himself says of it that "it was the very first thing that I did after I came to London. I worked at it in a garret, with a paper cap on my head, and, as I could then afford only one candle, I stuck that one in my cap, that it might move along with

me, and give me light whichever way I turned."* Chantrey was always best at works in which observation rather than the imaginative faculty was called into play, and therefore such a production as the "Head of Satan," which so wholly depended for its success on the latter gift, would hardly be said to give scope to his best powers, and as a work of art *per se*, it had its limitations; but good judges could easily recognise in it something far beyond the common run of sculpture, and it was certainly responsible for some of the commissions which now came to the artist. Of these Chantrey mentions one in a letter to the Rev. P. Inchbald, dated February 26, 1807: "I am sure you will be glad to hear," he remarks, "that I have some faint hope of having General (Sir John) Moore's monument to execute. I have made a model. My busts for the Naval Asylum, Greenwich, are finished, and much approved." These busts, of colossal proportions, were produced for Mr. Daniel Alexander, to whom Mr. Taffin the architect had introduced his friend, Chantrey. They represent Admirals Duncan, Howe, Vincent, and Nelson, and their successful execution is regarded as being the first decisive step in Chantrey's career as a sculptor.

Up to this moment he had not made, on his own showing, five pounds by his labours in this direction, nor, indeed, was it till he produced his bust of Horne Tooke in plaster, although he had executed already one or two successful ones—notably of J. R. Smith and Charles Sylvester, an old friend—that he could be said to have justified, from a monetary point of view, his choice of a profession. Another work dating from about this period was the monument to the Rev. J. Wilkinson,† Vicar of Sheffield, and Jones tells us that his employers obliged him to complete the work in that town, under their own eyes, as they suspected his ability to execute anything of importance in marble! That

* He produced this in the room allotted to his use by Mrs. D'Oyley at 24 Curzon Street.

† A cast of whose face for this purpose he had taken, as we have seen.

they had some reason for their diffidence is confirmed by Joseph Hunter, who, in his "History of Sheffield," says that this was Chantrey's first work, and that "he had never before this commission offered or attempted to chisel marble: and when he undertook it, had no more certainty of being able to complete it, than that self-confidence with which true genius, though modest as his, never fails to be inspired." Chantrey's pleasant, unaffected manners soon began to draw friends around him, beyond those of his own circle in Sheffield, and many of these were people of importance in their day. Thus in a letter to Ward, dated from the Isle of Wight, in July 1807, he writes: "Hans Sloane invited me to Poulton, near Romsey, for a few days—I have been there a month"; and again: "Mr. Sloane introduced me to Lord Henry Seymour, with whom we dined, in company with Lady Gertrude Sloane, and Lord and Lady Grantham"; while again in a later letter (November 30, 1807), to the same friend, Chantrey speaks of "going to spend a few days at Lord Palmerston's, Ramsey." He had already become a favourite with society, but notwithstanding such visits, together with excursions to Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, the Lakes, &c., Chantrey was anything but idle, and in the same letter he says: "At this time I have in my room eight portraits—some of them nearly finished—twenty guineas each, which answers better than painting portraits in Sheffield for five guineas each. I attend the Academy every evening, from six to eight o'clock." And again: "I have painted two pictures, from the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke—one, from the third and fourth verses; the other from the thirtieth and thirty-first verses, in a manner superior to what I had thought myself master of: I intend them for the British Institution—if not sold before it opens."

This shows that he had not yet discarded the sheet-anchor of painting, notwithstanding his growing success as a sculptor; indeed, caution and industry were ever his dominant characteristics, and until he had gained a firm footing as a sculptor he thought it wise to continue the execution of those portraits which he executed with

facility and sold very readily. It is interesting to hear what George Jones, R.A., who wrote his "Recollections" of Chantrey, in which the art criticism is the only valuable part, much else being sadly involved in error, has to say about the pictorial capabilities of the artist: "He would have been a good painter, as his works, though few, are remarkable for colour and expression; the former is striking, from its entire freedom from the too prevailing fault of blackness, being rich without gaudiness or positive colour; and they show that he was impressed by the tints of Velasquez, Murillo, Jan Steen and Hogarth; but it would have been difficult for him to finish very highly, as his sight was imperfect for diminutive objects." *

Of his industry, Chantrey himself thus speaks, in a letter to his friend, Ward: "I am not idle. I labour very hard, though I produce but little. You know I am aiming at what mortals call greatness; and of how few of the necessary materials am I possessed."

By another letter dated September 6, 1809, we learn that Chantrey had been to Buckingham House "to see the great men who planned the Walcheren expedition," and in the April of the following year he writes, full of excitement, an account of the Burdett riots. At this time he was a strong adherent of the popular hero; but at a later period of his life, his political ideas underwent a drastic change, and, although seldom expressing opinions on such matters, his views were sufficiently known for his old companions in Whiggism to dub him an "ultra-Conservative."

An example of Chantrey's energy and determination not to let any opportunity slip for advancing his fortunes, dates from this period, and is contained in a letter of April 17, 1810, which he heads "Burdett for ever!!" "I have something to tell you," he writes to his friend Ward; "Dr. Browne is dead: and now I beg leave to ask you a question which I hope you will condescend to answer. Is anything going forward for erecting a public monument? Who stands foremost in this business? If you will

* As a matter of fact he was blind in one eye, having been born so, although the defect was not discovered till he had reached his tenth year.

favour me with every particular, and also exert *yourself* to forward something of the kind, I shall feel myself much obliged to you." The result was that Chantrey was commissioned to execute a bust of Dr. Browne, which was eventually placed in the Board Room of the Sheffield Infirmary, "the great scene of his active benevolence."

It has generally been supposed that Chantrey married in the year 1811, but, as a matter of fact, the marriage register of Twickenham Church, where the ceremony took place, shows that this event occurred two years previously; the entry reading thus: "Francis Chantrey, bachelor, of the parish of St. George, Hanover Square, Middlesex, and Mary Anne Wale, of this parish, spinster, were married in this church, by licence, this twenty-third day of November, in the year one thousand, eight hundred and nine, by me Henry Fletcher . . . in the presence of us—Daniel Wale, Elizabeth Wale."

As Twickenham is given as the bride's parish, it is evident that her parents had accompanied Mrs. D'Oyley thither, when that lady relinquished her house in Curzon Street.

Although the Wales were only domestic servants, they occupied positions of trust and almost of friendship with their employer, and they had accumulated by frugality and honesty, while in her service, a relatively large fortune, and were thus able to give their daughter a dowry of no less, it is said, than £10,000.* Such a sum was most acceptable at this juncture, not only as Chantrey was in want of capital in order to set up an adequate establishment and to erect convenient studios, &c., but also because it enabled him to free himself from such debts, small ones for the most part as they were, which he had inevitably incurred. If the accession of such a fortune did not exactly render him independent of further exertion, it at least freed him from the petty monetary troubles which so frequently militate against the undivided attention of artists to their work.

* It seems likely that Mrs. D'Oyley contributed to this; though Holland surmises that ultimately Chantrey received even more than £10,000 with his wife.

Chantrey was now fairly launched on the sea of fortune. He had prepared himself by much labour and study for the profession he had chosen. His artistic knowledge, although, or perhaps because, he had not spent much time in academic schools, was sound and varied; he had become acquainted with the antique so long before as the days when, in Ramsay's establishment, he was surrounded by casts from works of ancient art; and he had been favourably received by many of the elder men whose days of activity were, in many cases, numbered but who lived again in the achievement of their successors. Of these the most notable perhaps was Nollekens. He had been attracted by the bust of John Raphael Smith which Chantrey had sent in to the Royal Academy for exhibition, so early as 1802, and he at once detected its essential qualities of rightness, and the promise it gave of its sculptor's future greatness. Indeed, so great an impression did it make on him that he exclaimed, "It is a splendid work. Let the man who executed it, be known," and thereupon had one of his own busts removed in order that the work of the younger man might secure an advantageous position.

It is, however, often the case that a man may have influential help, may work industriously and may succeed, up to a point, and yet not secure a hold on the public imagination until by some work he suddenly becomes popularly known, and thus appears to achieve success at a bound. This was somewhat the case with Chantrey: he had executed various monuments and busts with applause; he had been commended by such a judge as Nollekens; but it was not until he produced his bust of Horne Tooke that he could be said to have really tasted the sweets of popularity. This work, for which Horne Tooke—to whom Chantrey had been introduced by J. R. Smith, in 1810—gave the sculptor various sittings at Wimbledon, was executed in clay, and was such a success that Chantrey is said to have gained by it commissions to the value of £12,000; and this during his earlier days, when his prices for a bust ranged from but 80 to 100 guineas, and before they had reached the 200 guineas he

asked and readily received some ten years later. The friendship with Horne Tooke, inaugurated by the production of his bust, brought Chantrey into connection with many interesting people, and Tooke himself seems to have been attracted by the openness and sincerity of the sculptor, constantly inviting him to Wimbledon and giving him much excellent advice—notably, to avoid even the appearance of a disposition towards party politics; recommending him to get men of opposite views to his (Tooke's) own to sit to him, &c. That these axioms were carefully laid to heart by Chantrey is proved by his bearing, throughout his life, towards men of all shades of opinion, for he never obtruded his own views on any one except in familiar intercourse with intimate friends, and like St. Paul, was all things to all men.

On another point Tooke's advice was no less salutary. The sculptor, conscious of his deficiencies in book-learning, once asked the politician how he could remedy the defect, to which the reply was that he should not trouble himself about Greek or Latin, but make a point of reading the best procurable translation of the classics, together with such works in the English language as might further his knowledge, and at the same time, to attend as many lectures, on all kinds of subjects, as he could—precepts which Chantrey took much pains to follow, with the result that those who met him and knew his early history were often astonished by the extent and accuracy of his information.

In 1812 Stothard introduced Chantrey to that Mr. Johnes of Hafod for whom, as we have seen in a previous chapter, Banks did so much work. For this generous patron the sculptor executed a large monument to the memory of Miss Johnes. So vast, indeed, was this work that it was found impossible to exhibit it at the Royal Academy, although arrangements were made for showing it subsequently at an exhibition in Spring Gardens.

Just as the bust of Horne Tooke had established the sculptor's reputation in one direction of his art, so the monument to Miss Johnes did in another, and it was largely owing to the success it achieved that Chantrey was commissioned, by the Corporation of London, to

execute a full-length statue of George III. for the Council Chamber at the Guildhall. It is a curious fact that although Chantrey obtained the order for this work in competition with fifteen others,* at least one of the City Fathers objected to his being chosen, on the ground that he was a painter and could therefore know little about sculpture. When, however, Chantrey was able to show that he now gained his livelihood not by painting portraits, but by carving statues, all opposition was withdrawn, and the work, when completed, was regarded as eminently satisfactory, being afterwards described as "a good type of the whole-length statues which he subsequently produced, with such eminent skill in grandeur of design and boldness of execution." †

It was characteristic of the cautious, business-like procedure of the Corporation that before they would advance money to the sculptor, during the progress of the work, they obliged him to find two sureties, in £600, for its erection; Mr. Alexander and Mr. Sloane promptly coming forward as guarantors. It is, however, but fair to the memory of Sir William Curtis, the chairman of the Committee, to state that he assured Chantrey that in the event of his failing to find sureties "his countenance and conduct were sufficient guarantees to him, and that he, Sir W. Curtis, would be responsible." It might almost have been imagined that the Corporation had found out the fact, acknowledged by Chantrey at a later period of his life, that he "never worked for any other sculptor; and what is more, never had an hour's instruction from any sculptor in his life!"

During this year (1811) Chantrey exhibited no fewer than six busts at the Royal Academy; those of Horne Tooke, Sir Francis Burdett, J. R. Smith, Benjamin West, Admiral Duckworth, and William Baker; while in the previous year he had executed a posthumous bust of William Pitt for the Trinity House.

"His hands were now more than full," says Holland,

* Letter from Chantrey to Inchbald, given by Holland. The Council's decision was made known on April 4, 1811.

† Jones's "Sir Francis Chantrey."

"and the ordinary working hours of the day too short; but he had health, energy, and talent; and at this period, as well as in later years, he was engaged early and late. In summer he often rose before the sun; and at other seasons he has often been seen with a candle fixed in the front of his hat, and a chisel in his hand, employed at midnight, and even far into the morning, finishing some important work."

It is interesting, too, to remember that it was about this period that Allan Cunningham, then newly arrived in London from Scotland, and wooing fortune both as a stone-cutter and a man of letters, entered Chantrey's service as a "pointer," or rough hewer of statuary, remaining with him for a number of years as his foreman and secretary and confidential adviser, and receiving from his master the utmost confidence and trust in return for the zeal and affection with which he served him.

After once having made a start, Chantrey never looked back. Commissions began to throng in upon him, and the more work he executed the higher his reputation rose. To this period were due a number of heads, which proved the truth of Nollekens's assertion that "Chantrey was the man for a bust."

Thus in 1812 he exhibited busts of Mr. Johnes of Hafod, Curran, Stothard, and Northcote; in 1813, of Clive, for the Royal College of Surgeons, and of Granville Sharp, among others; in 1814, of Playfair, Wellington (a colossal head), and George III.; in 1815, of James Watt; in 1816, of Lord Anglesey, Sir Everard Home, and Sir Joseph Banks, *inter alia*.

From the first-mentioned year also date his statues of President Blair and Lord Melville, in Edinburgh. It happened that Mr. Alexander Machonochie, afterwards Lord Meadowbank, was chairman of the committee for erecting a monument to his father-in-law, President Blair, and being in London was so struck with Chantrey's bust of Horne Tooke, that he obtained for him the commission for the Blair statue. The sculptor travelled to Scotland to meet the committee, with the result

that not only was this statue entrusted to him, but also one of Lord Melville. In the following year he visited Mr. Machonochie at Meadowbank, and it was on this occasion that he modelled a bust of his hostess—the first of a lady he had ever executed.*

The royal commission, which resulted in the bust of George III., had been given some years before when the sculptor had been summoned to Windsor. Indeed, in a letter dated so early as 1810, he speaks of having been at the Castle and seen the king, probably with a view to studying the royal features at first hand. "I am engaged to execute a bust of the King, and am going to Windsor to model it," he writes.

He was now living at 13 Eccleston Place, Pimlico, "in my own house, purchased for 99 years,"† and he had his studio and workshop in Belgrave Place, whence many of his letters are dated. Here he was engaged early and late, and it was probably owing to his unwearied application that he was overtaken by illness in the early part of 1814. In a letter postmarked March 19 of this year, addressed to his friend Rhodes, he says: "You will not expect to hear that I have been confined to my room seven weeks this day. I have had a terrible bout, but am now mending as fast as the very bad weather will let me. I beg of you not to make any talk of this, lest it should reach my mother's ears; she supposes I have had a trifling cold." In the following year he paid his second visit to Paris, in company with his wife, Mr. Alexander, and Stothard the painter. Jones, in recording this, remarks: "He gave much attention to the works which then graced the Louvre; those of Raphael gave him the most satisfaction, from the grandeur of the outline, the fulness of the parts, the pathos and force of the whole. Titian excited his admiration for his colour and chiaroscuro, and in particular, 'The Entombment,' which he always spoke of as a pre-eminent work, yet not so excelling as to disparage the subjects

* At a later date he produced, at his own request, one of Lord Meadowbank himself.

† Letter to Rev. P. Inchbald, dated December 23, 1809.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
ELLEN JANE AND MARIANNE,
ONLY CHILDREN
OF THE LATE REV.ᵈ WILLIAM ROBINSON,
AND ELLEN JANE HIS WIFE,
THEIR AFFECTIONATE MOTHER,
IN FOND REMEMBRANCE OF THEIR "HEAV'N LOV'D INNOCENCE,
CONSIGNS THEIR RESEMBLANCES TO THIS SANCTUARY,
IN HUMBLE GRATITUDE
FOR THE GLORIOUS ASSURANCE, THAT
"OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

"THE SLEEPING CHILDREN"
By Chantrey

of 'Christ at Emmaus,' and the 'Deriding of the Saviour,' by the same hand; if works were not of first-rate quality he gave them little attention."

In 1816 Chantrey was elected an A.R.A., and in the following year, besides a number of busts—of Nollekens, Sir James Clarke, Hookham Frere, Bird the painter, and Bone the enamelist, among others—he produced what was destined to be one of his most, if not his most, famous work, "The Sleeping Children," in Lichfield Cathedral.

This remarkable piece of sculpture represents the two young children of the Rev. William Robinson, and had its origin in the following circumstances, thus recorded by Mr. Hawkins, as a result of a conversation he had with Chantrey, in 1833: "Nicholson, the drawing-master, taught Mrs. Robinson and her two children. Not long after the death of Mr. Robinson, the eldest child was burnt to death; and a very short time afterwards the other child sickened and died. Nicholson called on Chantrey, and desired him to take a cast of the child's face, as the mother wished to have some monument of it. Chantrey immediately repaired to the house, made his cast, and had a most affecting interview with the unhappy mother. She was desirous of having a monument to be placed in Lichfield Cathedral, and wished to know whether the cast just taken would enable Chantrey to make a tolerable likeness of her lost treasures. After reminding her how uncertain all works of art were in that respect, he assured her he hoped to be able to accomplish her wishes. She then conversed with him upon the subject of the monument, of her distressed feelings at the accumulated losses of her husband and her two only children in so short a space of time . . . and dwelt much upon her feelings when, before she retired to bed, she had usually contemplated them, when she hung over them, locked in each other's arms asleep. While she dwelt upon these recollections, it occurred to Chantrey that the representation of this scene would be the most appropriate monument; and, as soon as he arrived home, he made a small model of

the two children, nearly as they were afterwards executed, and as they were universally admired." *

When this exquisite group was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1817, it created a *furore* of admiration; such, indeed, was the anxiety to obtain a sight of it, that many people were unable to do so. It equally excited the admiration of the critics and touched the sentiment of the public, and we are told how mothers, with tear-stained eyes, were to be seen trying again and again to gaze on this beautiful and pathetic representation of youth and innocence cut off so untimely.

Chantrey had secured a name and no small share of popularity before this, but the Lichfield group brought him a much wider fame. Congratulations poured in on all sides; Robert Montgomery, in his Lectures on Poetry (which really seem to have been better than his poetry—as they easily might have been), extolled the sculptor and his work to the skies, and the accomplished Lord Grenville wrote Chantrey a letter, headed by the beautiful lines from the "Æneid," beginning, "Qualem virgines demessum pollice florem," concerning which he says, "I know not whether even they are not surpassed, in my judgment, by their graphical illustration in that admirable work which I again saw this morning, and, as I always see it, with increased delight. This is no compliment, but the real expression of my feelings."

The usual *mal à propos* remark was not, however, wanting, although, in the midst of so much praise, it could hardly have troubled the sculptor; and when he was told that some one had observed, "How admirably the mattress on which the children are lying, is represented," but had made no comment on the figures, he simply replied that "Whoever said it was a sensible, honest man, for he spoke of that which he understood, and of nothing else!"

But when it was suggested that not he but Stothard was responsible for the design, Chantrey rightly thought it necessary to contradict so damaging a report, and he told Mr. Hawkins that all Stothard had to do with it,

* See *Notes and Queries* for July 1850.

was to make a sketch of his original design in order that Mrs. Robinson might see the form it was to take.*

When the critics and the public were both so wholly at one in hailing "The Sleeping Children" as amongst the finest examples of modern British sculpture, it would have been strange had the Royal Academy been backward in affixing its *cachet* to the sculptor's fame, and it seemed but a matter of course that, in the following year (1818), it should elect him a full member of its body.†

"Orders now crowded in upon him as they were never known to crowd before upon a British sculptor," says Holland. To busts and portrait statues, more than he could well execute, were added orders for poetic figures, left to his own selection, from the Prince Regent, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Egremont, Lord Yarborough, Lord Dartmouth, Mr. Russell, and others. Of these commissions that which attracted most notice was his small statue of Lady Louisa Russell, now at Woburn Abbey, representing the young girl standing on tiptoe and caressing a dove. This exquisite figure did almost as much as "The Sleeping Children" to extend Chantrey's fame; it showed that he could produce fanciful figures based on portraits, with success, even when no pathetic interest helped to give them an added charm. An anecdote is told of this statue which, if similar to many familiar ones recorded of artists' work, shows how lifelike the figure was. While it yet stood in the sculptor's studio, a little child three years of age ran in, and on seeing it, held out its hands and called aloud to it, supposing it to be alive and expecting that the young girl it saw would answer its advances. To this year also belongs one of Chantrey's most lifelike and admirable busts, that of John Rennie, the engineer.

In 1819, the sculptor exhibited his seated figure of Dr. Anderson, which was destined for Madras, and has

* A claim was also put forward on behalf of an Italian sculptor, F. A. Legé, to the effect that the design was his; but it has been quite satisfactorily proved that, although he carved the statue, the model and design were Chantrey's, and his only.

† His Diploma work was a bust of the President, Benjamin West.

been said to be the very best statue of this kind he ever produced. There was indeed a simplicity and directness about this work, which is present more or less in all Chantrey's statues; he disliked extraneous decorations, and would have nothing to do with the school that affected the trapping of modern men in the garments of the ancients; and bare legs and arms as accompaniments to contemporary warriors and statesmen he as utterly abhorred as did Malvolio's Countess cross-gartered stockings. The consequence is that all his statues aim for their success, on presenting to the gaze the men and women as they actually were, and not as they might have been had they lived thousands of years earlier in the world's history. It is for this reason that his Dr. Anderson was so successful. A bust of Canning,* executed for Mr. Bolton, of Liverpool, was shown together with the larger work; and having completed them, Chantrey set off for Italy, in company with Wm. Jackson the R.A., and John Read, of Norton, on August 16, 1819.

In the career of most artists, a visit to Italy forms a prominent and significant landmark; not infrequently their later style is based on the new ideas and enlarged outlook consequent on such a further development of their minds. With Chantrey this can hardly be said to have been the case. His style was already formed, his principles already settled, and it is probable that few artists have been so little influenced by what they saw in Rome and elsewhere in Italy as he. At the same time his reflective mind absorbed the beauties which he saw in such abundance around him, and his trained intelligence was able to distinguish such things as really deserved study from those that called for little notice, more readily and with deeper insight than was often the case with more immature and even more impressionable minds. It is for this reason that his criticisms on the masterpieces of art have a deeper and more lasting value than is the case with the impressions of less carefully

* Now in Liverpool Town Hall. Another bust, by Chantrey, of the statesman is in Westminster Abbey.

trained or well-balanced intellects. Chantrey never allowed his enthusiasm to override his judgment.

We can follow the itinerary of his journey from certain notes he made in his sketch-book, from which it appears that he arrived, with his friends, in Rome on October 13. He lost no time in visiting the Vatican Museum, and there he was struck, as all must be, by the Laocoon and the Apollo, but otherwise seems to have confined himself to looking out for, and in many cases finding, beauties of a less hackneyed kind. Concerning what he did not admire, he was always accustomed to say nothing, and he here found so much restoration and inferior work in the midst of world-renowned treasures, that his silence concerning these things is quite understandable: he saw no necessity to praise, on the one hand, and on the other he preferred not to find fault.

In the Capitol, he remarks that "there are not any statues worthy of notice, excepting 'The Gladiator' and 'Antinous,' and about eight or ten that are in a small room, and were at Paris in 1815." He made a number of sketches, afterwards collected in several volumes and preserved by Lady Chantrey, and he paid no small attention to the pictures and frescoes in the various galleries and churches he visited; those of Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Domenichino and other masters who have raised themselves to unassailable heights, receiving, of course, his chief admiration. Of the various splendid buildings in Rome, it is interesting to learn that he selected the Portico of Octavia, that of Antoninus, Pompey's Theatre, the Colosseum, and the Cloaca for special praise, his plain-spoken reference to the first, together with the Temple of Juno, reading: "Originally a most beautiful building—now a miserable, stinking fish-market."

Besides the remains of ancient art, Chantrey, during this visit, had the opportunity of meeting two of his most illustrious contemporary sculptors, Canova and Thorwaldsen, with the former of whom he became on such intimate and friendly terms that, at parting, they exchanged cloaks as a testimony of their mutual regard

and admiration. Indeed it is said that Chantrey had induced Jackson to accompany him to Italy largely with a view to the latter painting a portrait of the great Italian; which he was luckily able to do.

Notwithstanding his regard for Canova and his appreciation of his achievement (although he always contended that he relied too much on extraneous ornament for his effects), it is characteristic of Chantrey's honesty of criticism that he made no secret of the fact that he considered Thorwaldsen's Hebe superior to the same subject treated by Canova.

It is unnecessary here to recapitulate Chantrey's recorded judgments on the innumerable works of art which he saw and studied during his Italian trip. It will be sufficient to say that, besides spending a considerable time in Rome, he also visited Venice, Florence—where he thought more highly of the works in the Medici Chapel than did most art critics at that period—Carrara, whither he went to select marble for his own work, and Milan, and that he returned to England before the end of the year 1819, having met Tom Moore, on his return journey, a circumstance which laid the foundation of a lifelong friendship between the sculptor and the poet.

"I had the good luck to meet Thomas Moore," writes Chantrey to Rhodes,* "no longer *Thomas Little*—he is chaste and moral, but as honest a Jacobin as ever! He travelled with me from Rome to Paris, and I was delighted with him." †

On December 30 Inchbald spent the day with Chantrey, and thus remarks on his friend's appearance after his return from the Continent:

"Chantrey looks well after his Italian tour, and is very amusing, having observed, after his happy custom, objects and occurrences specially characteristic of the countries through which he passed, but of which ordinary

* Author of "Peak Scenery," illustrated with sketches by Chantrey, engraved by Cooke, 1818–27.

† On parting from Chantrey, in Paris, Moore confided to his care, for delivery to Murray, that memoir of Lord Byron which afterwards became the subject of so much controversy.

tourists, who make books, are often, indeed *generally*, strongly unobservant."

To the period immediately succeeding Chantrey's Italian journey, are dated the busts he produced of Lord Castlereagh, Phillips the painter, Wordsworth, and Scott. That of Wordsworth was executed for Sir George Beaumont, that of Scott for the poet himself. The latter is, without doubt, one of Chantrey's finest productions in bust portraiture. It had its origin in a request preferred, in 1820, by the sculptor (the only occasion he ever made one) to the poet that he should sit to him. Scott readily agreed, and says Chantrey,* "I stipulated that he should breakfast with me always before his sittings, and never come alone, nor bring more than three friends at once, and that they should all be good talkers." This was complied with, Scott on one occasion being accompanied by Croker, Heber, and Lord Lyttelton. After the bust was executed, only forty-five casts were taken from it, although, as it was largely pirated in Italy, thousands of indifferent copies were put in circulation. In 1827 Chantrey executed a replica of the bust for the Duke of Wellington, the only duplicate he ever made.†

I will anticipate a few years by setting down here Chantrey's own account of his later bust of Scott, given in a letter to Sir Robert Peel: "In the year 1828 I proposed to the poet," he writes, "to present the original marble as an heirloom to Abbotsford, on condition that he would allow me sufficient sittings to finish another marble from the life for my own studio. To this proposal he acceded, and the bust was sent to Abbotsford accordingly, with the following words inscribed on the back: 'This bust of Sir Walter Scott was made in 1820 by Francis Chantrey, and presented by the Sculptor to the Poet, as a token of esteem, in 1828.' In the months of May and June in the same year (1828) Sir Walter fulfilled his promise, and I finished from his face, the

* In a letter to Sir Robert Peel, with regard to a later bust of Scott which he executed for Sir Robert in 1828.

† It is now at Apsley House.

marble bust now at Drayton Manor—a better sanctuary than my studio, else I had not parted with it. The expression is more serious than in the two former busts, and the marks of age more than eight years deeper." *

Chantrey had already executed a bust of Southey when, with Mrs. Chantrey and Collins, the landscape-painter, he stayed at Greta Lodge, Keswick, on his way to Scotland, in September 1818. Chantrey could hardly produce a bad head, but that of Southey was not considered so successful as many of his busts. Southey's son, indeed, writes of it that "The sculptor was not so successful as the painter (Sir Thomas Lawrence), and, though he made several attempts to improve the likeness by after-touches, he never regarded his task as satisfactorily accomplished, though many persons were well satisfied with it; indeed, although he promised my father a marble copy of it, he would never fulfil his promise, always purposing to amend his work. After his death I believe it was purchased by Sir R. Peel."

About this time, too, Chantrey produced his immense and important monument to David Pike Watts, which was set up in a chapel, specially erected for its reception, at Ilam Hall, Dovedale. Watts is shown on his death-bed, raising himself to bestow his parting blessing on his only daughter, Mrs. Watts Russell, and her children, who are represented kneeling beside the couch. This was one of the largest monuments ever erected in this country, and although Chantrey was generally happier, because more frequently engaged, on busts and single statues than in such poetical representations of everyday circumstances, he seems to have succeeded in this case particularly well.

In 1822, he produced his bust of George IV., now in

* Scott has the following entries in his journal, referring to these sittings:

"*May* 17, 1828.—I went to Mr. Chantrey, and sat for an hour to finish the bust."

"*May* 23, 1828.—I breakfasted with Chantrey and met the celebrated Coke of Norfolk."

A profile sketch of Scott by Chantrey is reproduced in Ruskin's "Fors Clavigera," vol. ii. p. 149, 1896 edit.

the Royal College of Physicians, and from this year onward he was overwhelmed with commissions, notwithstanding the fact that he now charged two hundred guineas and more for a bust. Nor was the king the only member of the Royal Family who patronised him. The Duke of Sussex was on excellent terms with him, and once, when Chantrey declared it impossible to do justice to his Royal Highness's face if he continued to wear a beard and moustache, even going so far as to decline modelling it under these conditions, the Duke appeared the next day clean-shaved, rather than forego the chance of being perpetuated by the sculptor's chisel.

At a later day Chantrey executed a group representing Mrs. Jordan surrounded by her children for another royal personage—William IV.

In the following year (1823) the sculptor executed the recumbent figure of the first Earl of Malmesbury, in Salisbury Cathedral. The Earl, known far and wide for his diplomatic services to this country and the diary in which he records them, is appropriately represented with a book in his hand. Dr. Carus, who accompanied the King of Saxony to this country in 1844, thus alludes to the fact: "The image of a noble, intelligent man, who, in the midst of bodily sufferings, still continues to apply himself to the higher objects of mental development, is here so admirably delineated, that I must pronounce this work, which is also beautifully treated in marble, from a statuary point of view, one of the most peculiar and remarkable of modern times."

To the year 1825 * are dated two somewhat similar monuments: those to Mr. Digby, seated on a couch, in Worcester Cathedral, and to Mrs. Boulton in Great Tew Church, Oxfordshire; but it was, as I have said, in busts and statues that Chantrey's genius chiefly exhibited itself. The number of these makes it impossible to mention all, or even to refer, except in the briefest way, to a tithe of them. There were not many notable men

* Chantrey lost his mother in October 1826; his stepfather, Mr. Hale, had died in September 1804, leaving Chantrey his residuary legatee after the death of his wife.

of his day who did not sit to him for one or the other. Many of these can be seen in our great towns, either standing in open places or enjoying the security of sanctuary in cathedrals and churches; for not a few you must travel to India: Stephen Babbington, Mountstuart Elphinstone (1833), and Sir Charles Forbes being at Bombay, and Bishop Heber (1830), Sir Edward Hyde East (1829), and Professor Wilson (1837) at Calcutta; while Sir Ralph Woodford is in St. John's Church, Trinidad, and Washington at Boston.

Of Wellington he modelled two busts, the second one dating from 1824, the year in which he put the finishing touches to his first statue of James Watt, in Handsworth Church, near Birmingham, and that of Dr. Cyril Jackson, Dean of Christ Church, at Oxford; and to the following years belong the various busts and statues named: 1827, the statue of Sir Joseph Banks, in the British Museum (there is another at Burlington House); 1828, the remarkable bust of Sir William Curtis; 1829, the bust of the Marquis of Stafford, as well as two poetical reliefs in marble depicting "The Parting of Hector and Andromache," and "Penelope with the Bow of Ulysses," now at Woburn; 1830, Sir John Soane,* in the Soane Museum; 1831, busts of William IV. and the Duke of Sussex; 1832, the statue of Canning,† in the Town Hall, Liverpool; 1837, statues of Sir John Malcolm, in Westminster Abbey, and Dr. Dalton, at Manchester; busts of Southey, John Murray, and Mrs. Somerville, for the Royal Society. In 1840, he executed his fourth head of a British sovereign, when he produced his bust of Queen Victoria;‡ and, in addition, his bust of Sir Charles Clarke, the statue of Roscoe, at Liverpool, and the monument to Northcote, at Exeter, date from this year. For this last work the painter had provided in his will, leaving the sculptor entire freedom of choice as to the

* Soane designed Chantrey's own gallery.

† Chantrey designed the headstone for the tomb of Canning's son at Kensington.

‡ His George III., George IV., and William IV. are in Goldsmiths' Hall.

form the monument should take. It is said that had the statue been coloured, it would have so resembled the subject that even his intimate friends would have supposed Northcote to be actually standing before them, so extraordinary was the likeness.

In the Chantrey Collection at Oxford may be seen casts of innumerable other busts * which Chantrey executed during the last full years of his industrious life. It is not necessary to give the names of all those who sat to him, but I may, at least, select from the list such well-known ones as those of Sir Robert Peel, Professor Porson, Benjamin West, Lord Egremont, Archbishop Sutton, Sir J. Wyatville, Abernethy, Sir H. Halford, John Hunter, Cowper, the poet, John Rennie, the engineer, Archbishop Howley, Lord Melville, and Sir B. Hobhouse. This is but a tithe of what he did, in this direction of his art, alone, and although he did not actually *chisel* many, if any, of these, the amount of labour necessary for the modelling alone is sufficient to excite wonder; particularly when we remember that such work by no means exhausted his output. In addition to these busts were his monuments, not, perhaps, many in number, but chiefly of large size and often comprising several figures, and his statues, which were both numerous and important.

Of the former I have already referred to several. To these, without enumerating many mural tablets—those to the Rev. Alexander Mackenzie and to Mr. and Mrs. Harrison, in Sheffield, *inter alia*—must be added one to Sir Richard Arkwright, in Cromford Church; another to Mrs. Cooke, in the church of Owston, near Doncaster; and yet another to Lady St. Vincent, in the chancel of Caverswall Church, Staffordshire; although as this last consists of but a single figure it should, perhaps, rather be included among Chantrey's statues than his monuments; and, having an affinity to this class of work, his Bishop Heber blessing the Hindoos, in St. Paul's. In

* "Chantrey's busts are valuable, in addition to their astonishing strength of natural character, for the fleshy manner in which he has treated them, which every real artist knows to be the most difficult part of the sculptor's task."—J. T. Smith in his "Nollekens."

Westminster Abbey are a number of memorial statues, &c., from his hand, and these include Sir John Malcolm, George Canning, Francis Horner, Charles Herries, Sir Stamford Raffles (which cost £2000), Sir George Staunton, and the immense statue of James Watt, the fifth of that famous man which Chantrey had executed, and which was only introduced into the St. Paul's Chapel, where it stands, with the greatest difficulty.*

"Near this (the altar tomb to Sir Giles Daubeny) is the stupid colossus whose introduction here is the most crying evidence of the want of taste in our generation: a monument wholly unsuited in its character to the place and in its association with its surroundings—which, on its introduction, burst through the pavement by its immense weight, laid bare the honoured coffins beneath, and fell into the vaults below, but unfortunately was not broken to pieces," grumbles Hare, not unreasonably.

Of lesser importance, may be instanced the monuments to his friend Mason, placed by Chantrey in Sledmere Church, near Malton; the Poyntz memorial in Eastbourne Church, Sussex; the altar tomb to the Rev. F. Iremonger, in Winchester Cathedral; the monument to the Duchess of Dorset, in the Sackville Chapel at Knole; and the monument to James Wildman, in Chilham Church, near Canterbury, although these do not, of course, exhaust his work in this direction.

Of his statues, one of the best known is that of William Pitt, in Hanover Square.† It is a recognised fact that the chief excellence of his achievement, in this direction, lay in the intellectuality he invariably gave to the heads of his sitters. This is well exemplified in the Pitt, as it is, in a still more marked degree, in the Canning in Palace Yard, Westminster. Everything else is treated with the utmost simplicity. The figures are direct and forceful, relying on no adventitious ornaments or effects for their success. The draperies are treated adequately, but not elaborately; the poses are natural and lifelike;

* There is also in the Abbey a bust of Dr. Matthew Baillie and a tablet to Dr. Thomas Young, by Chantrey.

† It was set up in 1831 and cost £7000.

but it is, in any case, the head rising nobly from the rest of the work, like a flower on its stem, which indicates Chantrey's consummate powers to their utmost, and stamps him as the great artist he was.

It was, indeed, always Chantrey's chief aim to give dignity and character to his heads, and he was never tired of insisting on the importance of this. The result is that, as Jones * put it, "probably no draped statues, ancient or modern, have surpassed those by the hand of Chantrey." What the biographer tells us about the sculptor's methods is also of interest: "Chantrey cast aside every extrinsic recommendation, and depended entirely on form and effect. He took the greatest care that his shadows should tell boldly, and in masses. He was cautious in introducing them, and always reduced them as much as might be compatible with the complete development of the figure. He never introduced a fold that could be dispensed with, rarely deviated from long lines, and avoided abrupt foldings. His dislike to ornament in sculpture was extreme; in marble he thought it intolerable, and reluctantly admitted it in bronze, for it was long before he could consent to decorate the royal robe of George IV., on the bronze statue at Brighton, and he would not have done so, if he had not been assured of the good effect produced by ornament in the bronze figures at Innsbruck."

In order that he might the more readily catch his sitters' true expression, he was accustomed to invite them to breakfast with him before attempting to model their features, and by thus engaging them in conversation or by exciting their interest in some subject, he frequently succeeded in catching sight of the *soul*. An instance in point occurred when he was engaged on his bust of Peel; he had given it the somewhat serious expression habitual to the statesman; but happening to relate an amusing anecdote to him, Chantrey saw his face lighting up with humour and interest, and immediately caught the expression and thus changed its character.

In addition to the casts of busts, there are also many

* "Recollections of Chantrey."

of the models for Chantrey's statues in the University galleries at Oxford, the whole having been presented to that institution by his widow in 1842. There may be seen the casts of the statues of George IV. (the original is at Brighton and another at Edinburgh); the George III. at the Guildhall; and indeed of the majority of those works to which reference has been already made.

It is known that Chantrey never greatly cared for bronze statues; * he always thought this medium limited the power of the artist in outline, especially in such a generally sombre atmosphere as ours; but nevertheless many of his bronzes are among his most conspicuous successes: the Pitt † already mentioned; the equestrian Wellington in front of the Royal Exchange; a similar statue of Sir Thomas Monro, at Madras; and the George IV. in Trafalgar Square; although in the last-named Chantrey's dislike to ornament has led him even to dispense with a saddle and stirrups, so that the unexpected presentment of a monarch riding bareback, without shoes or boots, too, is exhibited to our wondering eyes.

In connection with this royal statue, the story is told that the king himself ordered it in 1829, agreeing to pay the sculptor the large sum of 9000 guineas. A third of this amount only was handed over to Chantrey, and when George IV. died, the remainder was still unpaid, and it was not till 1843 that the Treasury settled the long outstanding account—with Chantrey's executors! It had at first been intended to place the statue on the top of the Marble Arch, then in front of Buckingham Palace, but this idea was abandoned, and it was erected in its present position.

With regard to this statue, Jones records the following anecdote:

"When George the Fourth was sitting to Chantrey, he required the sculptor to give him the idea of an

* He had, however, a splendid foundry at Pimlico, where statues of twelve feet in height could be cast in two firings.

† Chantrey was fond of high pedestals, and persisted in raising Pitt on one, against the wishes of the committee formed for its erection; the sculptor, rather than give up his point, offered to relinquish the commission altogether.

equestrian statue to commemorate him, which Chantrey accomplished at a succeeding interview, by placing in the sovereign's hand a number of small equestrian figures, drawn carefully on thick paper, and resembling in number and material a pack of cards. These sketches pleased the King very much, who turned them over and over, expressing his surprise that such a variety could be produced; and after a thousand fluctuations of opinion, sometimes for a prancing steed, sometimes for a trotter, then for a neighing or a starting charger, his Majesty at length resolved on a horse standing still, as the most dignified for a king. Chantrey probably led to this, as he was decidedly in favour of the four legs being on the ground; he had a quiet and reasonable manner of convincing persons of the propriety of that which from reflection he judged to be preferable."

When Chantrey had completed another statue of the king, which was placed on the staircase at Windsor, the monarch put his hand on the sculptor's shoulder, in the familiar way he was fond of affecting, and remarked: "Chantrey, I have reason to be obliged to you, for you have immortalised me."

Besides his innumerable statues and busts, and his considerable number of monuments of varying importance, Chantrey produced, in addition to those mentioned, various other works of a less ambitious nature, such as a mezzo-relievo representing "Plenty," once over the principal doorway of Sheaf House, Sheffield, which had been erected by his old friend Daniel Brammall; and a somewhat similar work—a relievo of Paul at Lystra, which he executed for Turner, and which for many years surmounted the mantelpiece of the painter's little home—Sandycombe Lodge, at Twickenham. But perhaps the best known of these *opuscula*, is the "Two Woodcocks" at Holkham, because of the story attached to it. Chantrey being on a visit to Lord Leicester, at Holkham, one day went out shooting; a woodcock rose and the sculptor raised his gun to fire, when at the same instant another got up, with the result that both birds were killed by the one shot. As a memento

of this circumstance, Chantrey sculptured the two dead woodcocks and presented the work to his host. The affair gave rise to not a few impromptus and epigrams; and among others Lord Wellesley produced the following, which, by-the-bye, Lord Brougham turned into Greek:

Chantrey by genius prompted to excel,
The first the fatal tube he tried;
Sad victims of his new-found skill,
Two beauteous woodcocks died.

Repenting quick the cruel deed,
And urged by pity to atone,
He calls his magic chisel's aid,
And turns them into stone.

Thus sacred justice is appeased,
Each bird in breathing marble lives,
While the immortal fame they gain
The sculptor shares and gives.

From a line in the above it would seem that Chantrey was a novice with the gun when the incident occurred, but he was always fond of outdoor sports, and at fishing was anything but a tyro. Once, indeed, when Malibran was visiting his studio and was remarking on what happiness he must feel in being surrounded by the fruits of his genius, he replied, "I'd rather be fishing"; and Scott, in a letter * in which he calls the sculptor "a right good John Bull, bland and honest and open, without any of the nonsensical affectation so common among artists," remarks that the sculptor was with him at Abbotsford, "and went off the happiest man in the world, having killed two salmon." "I do not believe," adds Sir Walter, "that the applause which he received for any of his fine works of art gave him more pleasure." †

Many of Chantrey's letters contain details of sport he enjoyed both with gun and rod; some of these are dated from Holkham and indicate no little prowess in the shooting way: for instance, twenty-eight hares, eight

* To his daughter-in-law, dated May 16, 1825.

† Scott gave Chantrey a dog with which he had been much struck. *See* Scott's letter to Miss Edgeworth, dated July 5, 1825.

pheasants and four partridges to his own gun, in those days of muzzle-loaders, is not bad! It was, too, from Holkham, on November 14, 1841, that Chantrey wrote to Sir Charles Clarke, when he speaks of his being "in a sad shattered condition," adding: "I dare not trust myself to say more about myself." From Holkham he went to Norwich, evidently unwell but exhibiting no symptoms that gave rise to any particular apprehension; indeed, on November 24 he was engaged in superintending the erection of the statue of Bishop Bathurst in the cathedral of that city. The same day he returned to London, and the next morning complained of feeling seriously unwell. His natural courage and energy, however, triumphed over his bodily discomfort, and he passed the day in his studio, superintending various works he had in hand—commissions to the value of no less than £50,000.* In the evening he took a walk with a friend, but had not gone far before he was seized with a paroxysm of severe pain. He was at once taken home and medical assistance was sent for. A soporific having been administered, he experienced so much relief, that he was able to converse; but suddenly, without any warning, he fell back in his chair and passed away; the cause of death, at the inquest, being given as "a spasm of the heart." He had passed his sixtieth birthday by a little over seven months. He was buried on December 6, 1841, in the vault in Norton Churchyard which he had selected for himself in the previous year.

Chantrey thus died in the fulness of his powers and at the meridian of his fame. It has been the lot of no other British sculptor to attain such popularity, based on equally solid grounds, as he. His natural gifts were increased by unremitting industry and unwearied application. What other men have gained by deep study of ancient art and classic formulæ, he seems to have acquired naturally: in simplicity and directness he was

* Among these was the statue of Dr. Goodall, for Eton; one of the Marquis of Wellesley, for the India House; and a group representing Lords Eldon and Stowell, who were to have been represented seated together on the bench.

himself classical; in the portrayal of character in marble he had the same natural gift as had Vandyck and Velasquez, Reynolds and Gainsborough, in paint. So certain was he of his power that, unlike many sculptors, he disdained all adventitious ornament, and would consent to nothing that did not savour of the utmost simplicity; at the same time there was, as Sir Martin Shee once phrased it, a truly patrotic and British character in all his thoughts, words, and works, and it is for this reason that he remains one of the most eminent, perhaps the most eminent, of British sculptors.

As a portrait-painter he can only be judged by those early, though numerous, attempts, which, however, showed no little promise; as a "landscapist," his many sketches, and the series of illustrations to Rhodes's "Peak Scenery" attest his excellence; as a discriminating critic, his remarks on what he saw in France and Italy, and in his own country, are a proof. His innumerable friendships with all classes of men tell of his popularity in social life: all his sitters became his friends, and in the blaze of his London triumphs—when kings were his intimates—he never forgot the earlier and humbler associates of his Sheffield days. Fond of a joke, amiable and pleasing in his manners, he was received with pleasure in the mansions of the great and the dwellings of the poor. No wonder that his death, which proved a national loss, should have been mourned by legions of friends whose sincere regard he had won and preserved.

Chantrey's hospitality was unbounded; his generosity splendid and widespread; no tale of distress left him unmoved or unresponsive, with the result that, not unfrequently, he was the victim of fraud; but more often he had the satisfaction of knowing that by his timely help, real want and privation had been alleviated. Many were his benefactions, too, where the recipients never knew, or if they knew, it was not till long after the circumstance, who had aided them in their distress.

The sculptor was a great snuff-taker, and it is said that his first greeting was generally, "A pinch of snuff?" and his second, "You will dine with me?" He seems,

however, to have realised that this habit was regrettable, and he often tried, though unsuccessfully, to break himself of it. "Sir," he once remarked to a stranger, "as a new acquaintance, I will give you a piece of advice, and it is this: Never take snuff. I have done so for twenty years, and have repented doing so for twenty years."

At his death, Chantrey left a widow, who died in 1875, but no children. His fortune was estimated at the large sum of £150,000. In addition to his private bequests, the income from this sum went to form that Chantrey Bequest, "to be devoted to the encouragement of British Fine Art in Painting and Sculpture only," which has been productive of such excellent results, and to which we, as a nation, owe the preservation in our midst, for the benefit of the general public, of so many masterpieces in the two directions of art named.*

Chantrey had received his knighthood from William IV.† in 1835, and he was also an R.A., an Honorary D.C.L. of Oxford, an Honorary M.A. of Cambridge, an F.R.S., an F.S.A., as well as a member of the Academy of St. Luke's at Rome, and of the Academy of Florence.

Among the representations of Chantrey, may be mentioned the following: (1) A crayon sketch by Eddis, considered by Holland to be extremely like; (2) the portrait by Raeburn; (3) a miniature in wax, by Earle; and (4) a full-size head, modelled by Smith, and representing him in the prime of life. Weeks also produced a profile of the sculptor which was engraved, and Turner executed a fine mezzotint of his portrait.‡

* For an account of Chantrey's will as regards this, together with a list of the works purchased under its terms, *see* "Life of Chantrey," by A. J. Raymond.

† It is not generally known that the king was desirous of erecting a memorial to Napoleon at St. Helena, and discussed the matter with Chantrey, but, for obvious reasons, nothing came of it.

‡ Like all contemporary artists who realised the significance of such things, Chantrey was an earnest student of the Elgin Marbles, and was one of those who gave evidence in favour of their acquisition by the nation. His remarks on that occasion were very short, in contradistinction to Flaxman's long and learned disquisition, but they were characteristically to the point, and, as coming from such an authority, had great weight with the committee.

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